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Feminist art history and theory at California State University Monterey Bay : a descriptive case study of a new course : action thesis ...

Judith Swartz
California State University, Monterey Bay

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Feminist Art History and Theory at
California State University Monterey Bay:
A Descriptive Case Study of a New Course

By
Judith Swartz

Action Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts in Education

California State University, Monterey Bay
College of Professional Studies

August 2005

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Feminist Art History and Theory at
California State University Monterey Bay:
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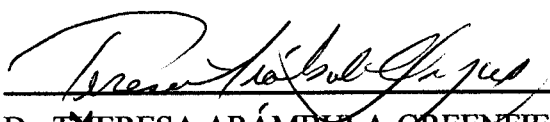
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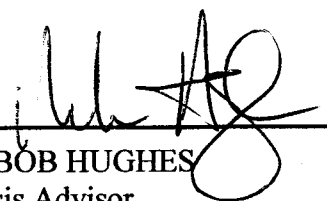
 8/25/05

Dr. SANDY HALE DATE

APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

 8/24/05

Dr. THERESA ARÁMBULA-GREENFIELD DATE
Coordinator of Master of Arts in Education

 8-15-05

Dr. BOB HUGHES DATE
Thesis Advisor

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Abstract

The lack of representation of women artists in art history can contribute to the notion that female students have nothing to contribute both historically and artistically. Female students of the arts could learn through feminist perspective art history curriculum that there is much more that counts as important contributions to art than what may be found in traditional coursework. California State University Monterey Bay has taken a leading role in providing alternative perspective curriculum to its students. This study examined a new feminist theory art history course to learn how this can best be presented and whether this can impact the female student's desire to continue her art studies and leave school with the confidence to compete in the art world.

Table of Contents

Chapter I - Statement of Purpose	1
My Experiences and Beliefs	1
Traditional Art History Theory	3
Non-Traditional Art History Theory	6
Conclusion	7
Chapter II - Literature Review	10
Introduction	10
Historical Context	10
Theoretical Framework	15
The Absence of Woman as the Artistic Creator	17
Women Artists in History	21
Genuine Women's Art Forms	23
Studies on Current vs. Traditional Art History Curriculum	25
Summary	28
Chapter III - Methods	29
Introduction	29
ResearchDesign	29
Setting	30
Methods of Data Collection	31
Participants/Research Subjects	33
Methods of Data Analysis	34

Chapter IV - Results	36
Introduction	36
Structure of the Class	36
Presentation of Feminist Perspective in the Classroom	44
Personal Meaning For Women Students	50
Personal Connections Between Students and Artists	55
Validation of Students' Contributions to Art	59
Chapter V - Discussion and Recommendations	64
Introduction	64
Discussion	66
Recommendations	71
Conclusion	75
Appendix A	76
Appendix B	78
Appendix C	80
Appendix D	81
Appendix E	85
Appendix F	87
References	99

Chapter One- Statement of Purpose

My Beliefs and Experiences

As a student of the arts, when seeking my undergraduate degree, it wasn't until I entered the Visual and Public Art Institute at CSU Monterey Bay, that I learned, through non-traditional contemporary art history classes, that women artists had made countless contributions to humanity's collective archive of artistic development. All traditional coursework I had encountered previously was taught in the traditional sense. Before this time, I had been studying art at a community college. A requirement for students in the art major was to take two semesters of art history. I found myself learning that the makers of groundbreaking and important art seemed to always be white European males.

As I began to build my portfolio and attempt to show my work or enter art competitions, I began to notice that, though women artists do show competitively, more men than women are accepted and come away with awards for their work. I began to do a little research project of my own at that time and found that white male artists, even in our contemporary world, outnumbered males of color and women by around two to one, even in amateur competitions and shows. I began to feel intimidated by fellow artists in the community and unsure of my own ability to contribute artwork professionally. As a woman artist in the community, and married to a white male artist, I can attest to the inequities in today's contemporary art world. I had gone through two years of art training and was specializing in watercolor painting and illustration. I began to enter numerous competitions and to send out samples of my illustrations to children's book publishers. It became very apparent in the local art community that though many women exhibited, the interest and the attribution of the label of gifted and genius went far more often to the

male artists in the community. Wherever my husband and I might exhibit, of the two of us, he was the one who attracted more attention for his work. Both of us exhibited a strong aptitude for realistic illustration techniques and even have a similar style and use of color, but he was self-taught. He always received a great deal more attention and also received more commissions. As he gained in confidence, I felt myself wondering what my work might be lacking, and I grew less confident. I began to notice that I started to paint less, and have less interest in exhibiting. I had worked with other women art students and many felt the same way, after just a few attempts at art competitions. Over the approximately six years that I exhibited in local competitions, approximately two per year, there were about four first prize ribbons awarded to local women artists, with about eight going to men. The women subjects in my study have often mentioned their lack of self-confidence as artists in the community, and this will be discussed further in the findings chapter.

I felt strongly that if I continued to expand my art training, I could break the barrier that continues to exist and become a serious professional artist/illustrator, so I continued my studies and eventually came to CSUMB. I resisted this non-traditional program at first, but gradually came to feel more and more validated as an artist by what I was learning in the non-traditional courses.

I believe this exposure to a wider variety of artists, those of color and those who simply do not fit in to the traditional discourse on art, helped me to see that my work had a place in the art world.

Traditional Art History Theory

In traditional art curricula, all art students, male or female, of any ethnicity, socio-economic class, or physical ability, learn that a select few European and American white males are the fathers of art, as we currently know it. Within this tradition, all genius and development of artistic greatness are generally attributed to men.

For women involved in the study of art, and with aspirations to become visual artists in traditional painting or sculpture, this tradition can set the tone for what they may be able to expect in the art world. Women artists, even in today's world, are less likely to become great artists than men. Their work may very likely be automatically relegated to a decidedly female artistic genre, such as home or craft arts, and they will be far less likely to be attributed to the development of artistic styles as their male counterparts.

Creating art history curricula, such as that one might find at non-traditional schools such as CSU Monterey Bay, that include the perspective of women artists throughout history, and also include the perspective of women who have faced gender, cultural, socio-economic and physical barriers in order to create and promote their art, would serve to bring a new and important perspective to the art student. Male and female students of all backgrounds could have the unique opportunity to see art history through a different lens, and to perhaps formulate different ideas about what counts as art and formulate new outlooks on their ability to compete in the art world as an art maker.

Students of art and art history, through the traditional art history theory coursework found in most higher educational settings, subconsciously accept the limitations placed on them by their gender, and acquire this subconscious belief through the traditional training that

allows the absence of women and the presence of the male “master” to define their roles as artists throughout history.

The study of art history in our educational institutions has traditionally looked at the history of the arts through the lens of the white male artist or “master” beginning as far back as ancient history. This sets the stage from the earliest possible moment for the assumption that men are the creators and women, as subject matter due to their role as the nurturers in their societies, are absent from the creative process.

The absence of women as artists in the traditional study of art history suggests that women lacked the genius necessary to become a master. Women’s presence as a subservient image in art also suggests that they serve simply as subject matter and not as creators. Perhaps women artists don’t believe in their ability to contribute art to the archive of work we consider important or defining. Perhaps female students, particularly in the first year of their college careers, lack confidence in their own abilities as students when confronted with the notion, through traditional courses, that women have not played a role in the contributions we consider important in art, history and society.

Traditional courses continue to socialize our young adult students to accept the absence of women and perpetuate the notion that only dominant culture men have the intellectual capacity to create and contribute. Women artists don’t believe in their ability to contribute art to the archive of work we consider important or defining.

Arts curricula which offer the feminist perspective could introduce students to primarily lesser-known women artists as a way to help them be aware of cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, and gender issues as they influence women artists, and the gender inequities that have prevented women from being in the forefront of the art world.

Women artists on the whole have experienced this inequity in the art world but the traditional study of women artists almost always excludes the work of women of different ethnic backgrounds, women in lower economic classes, and women with physical limitations. When we do look at women artists throughout history, we look primarily at white Euro-American women's work, usually from the aristocratic class, and how it fits into the various classic schools of art, and whether the women studied under the various masters who created the different genres.

Historically, women artists have been working, but, because they don't fit our notion of the artistic genius as set forth in traditional coursework, they are not generally considered important to study. Issues of representation have been present for all women artists, those of various ethnic backgrounds, those who struggled economically in our society, and those who faced physical challenges. Dominant culture ideology suggests that there is only one perspective on art history. Significant and important works are those that reflect the white male dominant experience throughout history. The study of art history begins with Upper Paleolithic carvings and cave paintings by what is generally considered the first race of Caucasian people, the Cro-Magnon. This ideology has us following the emergence of art as it applies to the various Caucasian cultures from that point forward, and generally attributed to men of early cultures. Historical perspectives on the development of art as a means of human expression must include all humans.

Non-Traditional Art History Theory

Institutions like CSU Monterey Bay can be considered non-traditional because the emphasis in the curriculum here is centered on the inclusion of diverse perspectives across disciplines. Unlike traditional institutions, which often continue to teach dominant culture perspectives in art and other disciplines, CSUMB faculty strive to bring the alternative stories forward in their coursework. The very vision of the institution is to serve the diverse population of the state. CSUMB places a strong emphasis on not only the perspectives of a multiculturally diverse population, but also on the social justice issues and issues of equality that impact the community of students.

Though CSUMB has at its core a multiculturally sensitive curriculum, it has for the first time this spring, offered a feminist perspective art history class. As a woman artist myself, and a future teacher with a strong interest in encouraging women to pursue their educations and interests in art, I believe the course may have greater personal meaning to students. Many women will be better served by such courses at institutions like CSUMB as they enter into territory traditionally held by men. My own experience at CSUMB as an art major in Visual and Public Art has created greater meaning for me in my professional life. Because I was exposed to new ideas about the ability of women to contribute important work to the world of art, I gained a greater sense of confidence about my own ability to do so. I know now that my work has value and there is a place in the art world for the work I do. I understand now that it is not impossible for me to get there. I know there is a lot of competition and the fight to be taken seriously as a woman will have to be undertaken from time to time, but that this fight is worthwhile and can only make the road smoother for those who will follow. I also know now how important

it is for women to learn about women artists throughout history as a way of helping them to validate their own experiences as artists. I will strive to include women's important contributions in my own curriculum and validate my own artistic creativity, as a result of meaningful instruction in art history. As I examine women's roles in traditional art history, I find that including the perspective of women artists gains more ground through a gender-involved epistemology, which, for me, springs from feminist theory as it involves equal representation of women in art history. Teaching art history through examples of women's art gives credence to the work that has been done and provides a clear identity to artists who happen to be women both in contemporary and ancient history.

Conclusion

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How is the feminist perspective presented in the art history curriculum at CSUMB?
- Does the inclusion of women's contributions to the collective archive of important work have personal meaning for women students at CSUMB?
- Do women students at CSUMB draw a personal connection between themselves and the artists studied?
- If so, does this connection create personal validation of a student's own contributions to art?

The answers to these questions are important because they will shed light on how women students gain an understanding of women's contributions to the art world and how those contributions change art history. They will also help us to understand if the

feminist perspective presented in the course creates a sense of confidence for women artists as they begin to enter the art world. When we see how the feminist perspective is presented, we will learn who the many working women artists are, both historical and contemporary, and we will see whether this gives women art students a sense of validation about their own work. Women can and should enter the competitive art world with a sense of pride and confidence, and they should not fear it because of their gender. For too long they have not been able to compete in this world at the same level as white male artists, so it is of vital importance that they will be able to do so. The answers to these questions will give us a sense of how this shift may occur at the student level and give us an awareness of how women will leave the university setting with the confidence and skills needed to compete.

This descriptive case study is one in which I participated and observed a new feminist perspective art history course offered at CSUMB. This study describes in depth the value feminist pedagogy has at this institution and its meaning for our students. I observed in the classroom setting to learn how the material was presented and how the students responded to the material. I interviewed the instructor, and distributed questionnaires among the students in the class, as well as conducted individual student interviews. I think it is interesting to examine the value and meaning this has for female students as they, too, become sure of their abilities and enter the world alongside men with a sense of confidence about their contributions.

This will prompt a social action component in which I will present my findings to the Visual and Public Art Institute faculty as a way for them to gauge the meaning and value of this new course. This is scheduled to occur in late August at the Institute for

Visual and Public Arts. The faculty will be present to hear me present my findings of the study. As they consider what to eliminate and add to the course, they will have the benefit of my research results, which will indicate what components were considered relevant by the students and which components might need further development. The student interviews will shed light for the faculty on the more personal aspects of the course, such as how women feel when they consider their own artwork and how they may have come to feel confident about their abilities. I expect this will be of great importance to the VPA faculty with regard to the development of a meaningful and gender equitable course.

Chapter Two-Literature Review

Introduction

A survey course of American woman artists could introduce students to primarily lesser-known women artists as a way to help them be aware of cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, and gender issues as they influence women artists, and the gender inequities that have prevented women from being in the forefront of the art world. The study of women artists almost always excludes the work of women of different ethnic backgrounds, women in lower economic classes, and women with physical limitations. When we do look at women artists throughout history, we look primarily at white Euro-American women's work, usually from the aristocratic class, and how it fits into the various classic schools of art, and whether the women studied under the various masters who created the different genres. The literature in this chapter includes the writings of feminist theorists, feminist art historians and scholars, traditional art historians, and educators who have revised traditional art history curricula to reflect a feminist perspective in the college classroom.

Historical context

From an historical context, the study of art history in our educational institutions has traditionally looked at the history of the arts through the lens of the white male artist or "master" beginning as far back as ancient history. Even cave paintings, often the examples of the beginnings of the human exploration of art, are attributed to Neanderthal or Cro-Magnon man. Constable (1973) attributes the beginnings of painting and design with the use of colored pigments, such as ochre, specifically to Neanderthal men who

may have been painting their faces and bodies for luck in a hunt and it is generally acceptable to identify men as the hunters and women as the gatherers in early society. Some art history texts attribute early sculptures to early man. Though some sculptures from early civilizations are representative of women, they are often thought of as possible fertility symbols or icons created by men. This sets the stage from the earliest possible moment for the assumption that men are the creators and women, as subject matter due to their role as the nurturers in their societies, are absent from the creative process.

Important works of art, studied in most art history classes, include the works of almost exclusively white male European artists. The period and school of the time identify these works. An example of a typical collection of such works is discussed by Lacotte, Lacambre, Distel, and Freches-Thory (1986), as they discuss the Musee d'Orsay's collection of work. The works are representative of the art of the late 19th and early 20th century and therefore this collection is a great example of what we think of when we think of who our foremost artists were. The exhibited works cover schools of art such as eclecticism, realism, impressionism, post-impressionism, naturalism and symbolism. The collection exhibits what traditional art history theory considers the most important artists of each school. Daumier, Delacroix, Cabanel, Degas, Rousseau, Tissot, Manet, Renoir, Monet, Pissarro, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Seurat, Lautrec, Gauguin, Liebermann, Homer, Sargent, Matisse, Klimt, and Munch are among the hundreds of artists representative of the important schools of art. They are all white European and American men.

The collection exhibits only a handful of women artists, among them Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot. Interestingly, according to Nochlin (1999), Cassatt's work is

a study of women's social and domestic life. She portrayed women involved in very domestic roles and involved in very exclusively feminine chores; bathing babies, taking tea, sewing, attending social functions, but this is an honest representation of Mary Cassatt's contemporaries during her time. However, at the time, Cassatt was creating important work that was acceptable for a woman artist. She belonged to a well-to-do family, and her subject matter reflected the accepted notion, as created by the white male powers, of the genteel delicacy of women. Cassatt was not controversial. Nochlin, (1999), explores through her essays the representation and depiction of women in works of art. Like Broude and Garrard (1982), Nochlin's essays discuss the images of women. Nochlin reveals the nuances not always obvious in works of art. Many works portray family life and body language suggests how a woman may have felt about her domination by her husband. Nochlin explains the image of the woman as the subject, and the subjugated. The images make it clear who has the power in society. The representations repeat these themes over and over again. Nochlin examines her subject from the structure of feminist theory with a gender-involved epistemology.

Students of art history rarely see the work of controversial women artists and almost never that of women of different ethnic backgrounds, women from poor backgrounds, or women with disabilities. What follows are some examples of women artists who have created great works and who have also created art movements, who are not studied in the mainstream art history classroom.

According to The Guerrilla Girls (1998), an anonymous group of artists and activists, Artemisia Gentileschi was a teenage artistic prodigy working in her father's studio in the 1500's. At age seventeen she had already completed many paintings,

including a very well known one called *Susanna and the Elders*. She suffered a rape by one of her father's colleagues. The rapist promised to marry her to preserve her reputation, but Artemisia did not marry him and managed to lead a very independent life for a woman in her time. She set up her own Atelier, learned to read and was the first woman to be admitted to the *Accademia Del Disegno*, and she produced many paintings that rival the quality of any man's work from the same period. Artemisia, like the few women painters of her time and even much later, was able to paint because of an association she had with a man in the art community, in this case her father, but she was an oddity and still not taken seriously in the art world.

The Guerilla Girls, (1998), bring forward the stories of other women artists from ancient to modern times. They suggest that we rethink why it is we look at certain artists work as the hallmark of a particular style or genre and include all art, period. The examples of art by a diverse group of women in this book include Native American, African-American, Mexican, and Mexican-American, Lesbian, Jewish and white. Their emancipatory tone demands that we recognize the fine examples of work by fascinating women artists in western art.

According to Sonnenstrahl, (2002), contemporary deaf women artists have formed collectives and have created new genres of artistic style and elements that are unique to their experience. Sonnenstrahl (2002) examines deaf issues that have impacted the work of particular artists as well as how artists were impacted by the art world itself. Deaf artist have formed art movements in recent years, one of them called De'VIA, meaning deaf view / image art. It is particularly interesting to note that many works by various De'VIA artists reflect the artists' feelings of oppression by the banning of sign

language in schools. De'VIA is a group of deaf cultural artists, as opposed to deaf artists, who don't necessarily use art as a way to express the deaf experience in America. Many artworks by De'VIA artists portray images of being silenced, such as a work by 20th century American deaf artist Betty G. Miller, of wrists bound in chains, and fingers chopped off, depicting that Ameslan or sign language is prohibited in many schools for the deaf. Women from every background experience marginalization in the world of the arts. Whether it is their ethnic background, economic status, or physical limitations, women working as artists find themselves placed below men in significance. Working from an emancipatory epistemology, Sonnenstrahl (2002) confronts the notion that deaf women artists, much like women artists of color, have no place in the study of art history, along with all women artists.

Sonnenstrahl (2002) presents a comprehensive history of deaf artists in America with the biographies of more than sixty accomplished deaf American artists. One of the many marginalized groups on the American cultural map, deaf people have been oppressed, forced to use language that is not natural to them, institutionalized against their will, misdiagnosed as retarded or insane, denied their basic rights, and patronized in the educational setting. Sonnenstrahl also examines the work of deaf artist Mary Thornley, one of many Deaf artists who create moving visual pictures of the deaf experience from the oppressive colonial days to the freedom of the seventies, and to the acceptance of the nineties. Contemporary deaf women artists have formed collectives and have created new genres of artistic style and elements that are unique to their experience. Sonnenstrahl (2002) examines deaf issues that have impacted the work of particular women artists as well as how the artists were impacted by the art world itself.

The Guerrilla Girls (1998) contend that art historians and art critics have largely ignored the work of white women artists and the work of virtually all artists of color, both female and male, because the work did not meet their criteria for quality. These criteria place a low value on any work that does not express the white male experience. One example of this is Edmonia Lewis. This African American and Chippewa woman was born in New York in 1845. Because she was Chippewa, she was sent to live with them after she was orphaned at age nine. This probably contributed to a more unusual upbringing than the typical young African-American child of slaves may have had during the 1850s, and she did have the opportunity to go to Oberlin College in Ohio. She also had the good fortune to be among people who were dedicated abolitionists. She was greatly talented and began to sculpt. She was treated poorly in America; accused of various crimes and it wasn't until she left the US for Rome, that her work became popular. She had to leave the US in order to make artwork about slavery in this country. She was a marble sculptor and her statues in the neoclassical style that she learned in Rome were celebrated until the style fell out of favor. Ironically, her popularity in Europe stemmed from the fact that as a black woman from America, with a great deal of artistic talent, she was a curiosity, not a serious artist.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this thesis is based on feminist theory and the notion that women and men are equal in their ability to create and contribute to the world of art and history. Feminist scholars have laid the groundwork for our understanding of

feminism. According to Lerner (1993), feminist theory leads to the development of what she calls a feminist consciousness. Lerner (1993) stated:

I define feminist consciousness as the awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; that they have suffered wrongs as a group; that their condition of subordination is not natural, but is societally determined; that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally, that they must and can provide an alternative vision of societal organization in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self-determination. (p. 14)

According to Freedman (2002), the movement for equal rights for women began in Europe in 1848, with large groups of feminists gathering in the United States that same year. The political climate across the Western world included revolutionary feminists demanding property rights, the right to vote, rights to education for women and more. Feminists in the United States were also calling for an end to slavery. This was feminism in its earlier form and feminists continued over time to add to the list of demands other kinds of gender equalities such as the representation of women's contributions to history and the arts across disciplines in the educational setting.

According to Kaufman and Scott (1993), the emergence of radical feminist theory and its attempt to establish a collective identity of women emerged in the sixties, during a time when oppressed people were demanding an end to powerlessness. The civil rights movement helped to initiate the women's movement. African-Americans and women were demanding equality, power and identity. One of the main aspects of feminist theory that will apply to my work is the creation of identity for women as singular beings, free from an historical oppression under the rule of men. As feminist historians began to fill universities, other areas of academic study came under feminist scrutiny. Philosophy, the

arts, world and American history in the traditional ideology were questioned. Broude and Gerrard (1994), contend that the women's movement of the 70s gave rise to the Feminist Art Movement, which would serve as a new way to look at art history. Broude and Gerrard (1994) write:

...art made by feminist women represented a radical new beginning, a Part Two in the history of Western culture to complement the largely masculine history that would now become Part One. The goal of feminism, said early spokeswomen, was to change the nature of art itself, to transform culture in sweeping and permanent ways by introducing into it the heretofore-suppressed perspective of women. (p. 10)

Broude and Gerrard (1994) go on to discuss that in fact, there is really no universal women's perspective, and that rather art made by women may very well not have a feminist theory background. Broude and Gerrard (1994) feel though, that feminist art, within the context of art history has had a significant effect on postmodernism, as we know it in America. Broude and Gerrard (1994) go on to state:

We owe to the feminist breakthrough some of the most basic tenets of postmodernism: the understanding that gender is socially and not naturally constructed; the widespread validation of non- 'high art' forms such as craft, video, and performance art; the questioning of the cult of 'genius' and 'greatness' in Western art history... (p. 10)

The absence of women as the artistic creator

Some traditional art historians, such as Kempers (1987) write about various historical periods and the emergence of various methods of painting with never a mention of a woman artist, nor any mention of the societal implication of the lack thereof. According to Kempers (1987), the history and theory of art, as we understand it today had its beginnings in

Renaissance Italy. Specifically, the sixteenth century saw the collective effort to formulate a formal theory of art based heavily on the writings of Giorgio Vasari, a sixteenth century painter and architect. His work served as the model for other written collections of artists' lives by other painters and art patrons, who, as patrons, set the tone for determining whose work was important and valuable. It is interesting to note that all reproductions of paintings in this text are by European males and no mention is made of the few woman artists of the time.

Lloyd, (1985), discusses works the author considers to be important milestones in the various artistic movements and schools of artistic thought from the ancient world to the 1900's. The text is written in language that suggests that the genius that created these works was decidedly male. Lloyd (1985) writes, "it is for his creative ability in so manipulating them [line, color, shape and mass] that an artist receives credit. The illustrations in this book do indeed attest the various levels of artistic creativity achieved by Western man..." (p.8). It is of interest to note that of the more than seventeen hundred entries of examples considered artistic milestones, only six are by women.

Feminist scholars have looked at the issue of the unimportance of women artists in art history, and the lack of examples of women's work in various ways. Some art historians have concluded that there were no great women artists because women had no opportunity to pursue a career. For example, Pollack (1988), discusses that because women most often worked in subordinated positions as laborers in low-paying domestic jobs, which required little skill other than a woman's ability to nurture and care for children or the for the domestic realm, they were not creative minded and therefore incapable of being artists. Pollack (1998) writes, "Creativity has been appropriated as an ideological component of masculinity while femininity has been constructed as man's and, therefore, the artist's negative." (p. 22)

The emergence of feminist theory has sparked feminist historians such as Nochlin (1999), to question why women as artists are absent from the art history curriculum as we generally know it to be. Feminist art historians have questioned the absence of women as artists and why traditional art history theory tosses one or two examples our way of women who have achieved greatness alongside of men, as if throwing us a bone to satisfy our demand to see and understand the work of women as important artists. For example, Nochlin (1999) sums up that women are not absent from art history, as they are represented widely through the work of both men and women, but they are represented as subject matter, in a domestic and subservient way, with one or two women as respected artists perpetuating the subservient role of women themselves, through their subject matter, while men represent themselves as the power holders and creators.

Nochlin (1998) also explores the unconsciously accepted view of white male dominated theory in art history. Her essay, *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* asks the very question and discusses several possible theories on the absence of women. Nochlin (1998) offers a traditional explanation from the dominant culture ideology, which suggests that there are none, because women were generally thought to be incapable of greatness. Nochlin (1998) also explores the suggestion by some art historians that women's art exhibits a different and feminine style, therefore having an alternate greatness, one that is represented in works of art by the presence of feminine themes. Lastly, Nochlin (1998) explores the idea that traditional greatness is attributed to genius, that the great artist at some point cannot contain his genius and, once revealed, he is nurtured into artistic greatness under the tutelage of a master artist. Nochlin (1998) questions why great artists are never women or even men of high standing, such as

aristocrats, who more often took on the role of patron. She suggests that perhaps those for whom there are more demands and pressing business, such as aristocratic men, and certainly women on whom the bulk of domestic work fell, had little time to discover their genius, while dysfunctional, insane and alcoholic men (as many great male artists were) rarely had legitimate work and therefore fell into the artistic lifestyle. Linda Nochlin's essays explore the unconsciously accepted view of white male dominated theory in art history. She describes the gut reaction of feminist theory, that of finding examples of underrepresented works completed by women during the periods of what are generally considered the key developmental periods in art to prove that indeed, there are.

Another example of art historians who question the notion of women's inability to be artists are Broude and Garrard, (1982), who look more at the role of women as represented in art history than at works created by women. It suggests that women serve as the subject matter in the arts rather than the creators. The role women play as they are represented by various works of art gives meaning to the lack of representation of women as creators. Women are depicted working at menial farm chores or domestic tasks. They are mothers nurturing children, or they are simply nude models for the male artist who is in a position of authority. This serves to explain why women were simply too busy with the tasks of everyday life to afford the luxury of art making.

Battersby, (1990), is another example of a historian who discusses the roots of the idea of genius as a strictly male attribute, therefore disallowing the notion that women could exhibit artistic genius. According to Battersby (1990), having its roots in prehistoric times near Rome, the notion of "genius" began as a spirit and evolved from

the spirit's masculine qualities to a way of thinking about a man's potential for greatness.

Battersby (1990) writes:

By the end of the eighteenth century, 'genius' had acquired a Romantic grandeur. It had been transformed from a kind of talent to a superior type of being who walked a 'sublime' path between 'sanity' and 'madness'. (p. 103)

Battersby (1990) goes on to note "the driving force of genius was described in terms of male sexual energies." (p.103)

Women artists in history

Other schools of thought, which spring forth from feminist theory, work from an emancipatory epistemology. Feminist scholars and researchers insist that indeed there were many important women artist working throughout history, whose stories are not told, not because their work is not good, but because women artists are not important. Dominant theory has society believing that only work by men is groundbreaking and significant to the development of artistic movements. This emancipatory perspective brings those stories to the forefront and critically examines the work and life of the artist.

The Guerilla Girls (1998) are an example of scholars who critically examine art works throughout history and they suggest that the definition of greatness as it applies to our collective notion of art history needs to change to include women and particularly, women of color. They suggest that we rethink why it is we look at certain artists' work as the hallmark of a particular style or genre and include all art, period.

They uncover forgotten examples of art by women that provide some evidence that women were actively and competently creating works of art that rival many of those

works by men considered the masters, but which are simply relegated to the genres which are considered insignificant and secondary.

The Guerilla Girls, (1998) an anonymous group of artist/activists, celebrate the lives and stories of women artists from ancient to modern times. They reject the notion that there are no great women artists and find many examples throughout history, which can be compared to many of the masters. Women artists often began as the muse, inspiration and model to their male counterparts and eventually became very fine artists in their own right. Some examples of women artists from the 1500s to the 1900s in this book are Artemisia Gentileschi, Sofonisba Anguissola, Marietta Robusti, Judith Leyster, Rosa Bonheur, Edmonia Lewis, Harriet Powers, Julia Margaret Cameron, Mary Cassatt, Claude Cahun, and Kathe Kollwitz

Another example of an art historian who brings the life stories of women artists forward is Borzello (2000), who notes that the woman who created visual art had no place in the art world, considered a male profession. She goes on to note that the other arts, such as dancing, music or acting, have welcomed women for a much greater time. Borzello (2000) writes:

There was a point to their skill, which was understood by all. But women artists were intruders in the art world, a world of which men claimed to be open to everyone of talent but which in practice made few moves to welcome women. (p.7)

Borzello (2000) goes on to discuss that the women who worked as artists did so regardless of this, and struggled to succeed. Some women artists that Borzello discusses are Catherina van Hemessen, Barbara Longhi, Caterina dei Vigri, Lavinia Fontana, Mary

Beale, Contance Mayer, and Angelica Kaufman. These painters worked from the 1500s to about the 1700s.

According to Chadwick (1990), women were actively involved in the arts from the middle ages to contemporary times, but Chadwick (1990) notes that though they painted many great works which rivaled the quality of any male artist's work, they were generally denied the opportunity to train at the various schools of art. In France following the revolution, women were allowed to exhibit in the Salons. Though, at this time, attempts were underway to restrain the activities of women, they did continue to make some headway in this regard. Some women artists discussed by Chadwick (1990) are Rachel Ruysch, Clara Peeters, Catharine Read, Mary Delaney, Ann Seymour Damer, Elizabeth-Louise Vigee-LeBrun, Rebecca Soloman, Berthe Morisot, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Louise Borgious. These artists worked from the 1600s through the 1900s.

Genuine women's art forms

Feminist theory as it applies to art history prompts historians and art critics to question what can be considered genuine or great art. According to Congden (1996), colonial American art such as embroidery, weaving, quilting and knitting were creative activities that filled the lives of women. When such examples are particularly well-made and have survived for several generations, they are often placed in natural or cultural history museums as opposed to art museums, and are often then attributed to a culture or group rather than an individual, i.e.: Native American blankets, Amish quilts, etc. The long held belief which stems from our traditional study is that only work that is created by those individuals we consider masters are acceptable as examples of genuine art. The

belief is that anything created by women outside of the traditional art world and work created by ethnic groups, such as tribal art, simply fall into a folk art or crafts genre and though important, has little significance in the traditional sense of art history.

Though many times work by women artists is relegated to the craft or home arts genre, and therefore not considered important in the development of traditional art, some feminist art historians and scholars critically examine such work and show that the work is a true art form exclusive to women artists.

An example of one such art historian is Mainardi, (1982), who would argue that artistic genius has indeed broken free in women, in spite of their need to constantly work on domestic chores. They were drawn to the creative forces. They created works of great beauty or great meaning, but the lack of value placed on the work in the traditional art world relegated it to the world of crafts, curiosities, trends, and folk or culture art.

Mainardi (1982) suggests that a true great art form by women is the American quilt. Though women needed to complete domestic chores, the artistic genius and desire to express oneself aesthetically breaks free while doing so, with the classic American quilt, exclusively a women's art form. Mainardi (1982) discusses how many art historians think of the home arts and needlework as crafts, and therefore an exclusively women's realm, though she insists that quilting is a genuine art form, exclusive to women, at least historically. In more contemporary times, the art of the quilt continues to be pursued and men are often involved in fabric arts and quilting.

According to Broude and Gerrard, (1992), the nineteenth century in France saw the creation of *l'art feminine*, a lesser but genuine critical category of artistic works created by women. Though still not considered 'high art' as the works of men were, the category

did allow for some critical analysis and recognition of the works. This inclusion did serve to start the trend toward the limited inclusion of women's work.

Studies on current vs. traditional art history curriculum

Professors of art history in recent years have included the perspective of women as they craft their courses around a gender studies model. Dissatisfied by the notion that their students will miss out on a women's perspective in art history, some professors are including the comprehensive study of women's role and image in their art history courses.

For example, Dufresne, (1994), an art historian and teacher of college level art history course, discusses ways which she has found to "topple the canon" in the teaching of art history by focusing on women in art, both as artists and as subject matter in the images throughout history. She uses her own experiences in her classrooms to conclude that the students who studied art history from a women's perspective come away with a greater sense of women's roles throughout history and their very real and great contributions to the development of key artistic genres, even as subject matter. She also presents pottery, quilts and other pieces, often given their own place in art history outside of the traditional, as important art.

Dufresne (1994) notes that students find the courses very rewarding and surprisingly different than traditional art history classes because she allows them to take on the role of explorer. Students bring back to class information about women in art history, either as images or artists themselves, that they have researched and discovered

on their own. Not only does Dufresne (1994) offer a new perspective on the traditional canon, she teaches it in a different way and has documented the results in her research.

Dufresne (1994) also appears to value an epistemology of the gender involved standpoint and uses alternative curriculum as a way to learn how effective an alternative perspective is for her students. According to her research, students who have taken the alternative classes instead of the traditional classes come away with a greater understanding of art as a form of expression and with fewer preconceived notions of gender limitations in art.

Witcombe, (1995), a college art history professor, has also worked to create an alternative curriculum. Feeling that his students were not grasping art history in its fullest sense, Witcombe (1995) describes a different tack he took with his students in an effort to give them an alternative perspective on art history. He felt that because important work is significant as a result of the social climate of the artist's time, failing to see the entire picture of the social and historical context of the time meant that students weren't making connections about women's roles in art and society. He offered curriculum that challenged the students to more deeply analyze the work in relation to the historical context of the periods they were studying. His results showed that students in the alternative classes had a greater understanding of the connections that social and historical issues had in the creation of art and in the roles both women and men played in its development.

Witcombe (1995) discusses his disappointment in the traditional way art history is taught. He felt that students were receiving instruction in art history, but were not grasping the meaning of art in history. In this article he discusses some changes he made

to his courses in order to give the students knowledge of meanings, social impacts, political influences and gender inequities that exist throughout history and impact the form the development of art has taken over the generations. Witcombe (1995) did not simply want his students to be able to recognize a work of art, but to be able to discuss the social climate, gender issues, and analyze the image of women and men in art that was present during the time of the artist. Witcombe (1995) could then have students draw comparisons to contemporary issues involving the images of women and men in today's media-driven society. Witcombe includes in the article a sample syllabus of his new course.

In a third study that I looked at, Coulter, Hedges, and Goldenberg, (1990), conducted a two-year study in which they worked with selected faculty in this community college area. Though they did not work with art history curriculum, they revised existing English and literature curriculum to include a gender, class, and race component into the material. The faculty then taught the revised courses. Approximately 900 students across the campuses took the revised courses. Coulter, Hedges and Goldenberg (1990) stated:

Faculty report that the results of a pre- and post-course exercise administered in some of the revised courses to determine any increase in student sensitivity to and understanding of gender, race, and class indicate that some significant change in perception and awareness did occur. (p. 18)

What is interesting to note is that not only were students enlightened, but faculty were also, as they learned that many of the students had not had exposure to, and did not even know the meaning of gender, class, and race. The most telling aspect of the study was the impact on the students. According to Coulter, Hedges, and Goldenberg (1990):

...journals of the project faculty and written and oral workshop reports from coordinators, students responded positively to the new course content: students became more involved with the course materials, wrote more papers, asked more critical questions, tested course materials against and related them to their own lives, and demonstrated greater interest in and understanding of the experiences of others. (p. 19)

Summary

It is clear that historically women have been absent from the discourse on what counts as art but certainly not absent from the art making process. Traditional literature on art history simply avoids the inclusion of women, while feminist art historians include hundreds of examples of women artists throughout history. Feminist theorists question the lack of the women's perspective in the teaching of art history and the designation of women's work as an example of home arts, ethnic arts or crafts. Consequently, educators have sought to bring the woman's perspective into the classroom with the intention of giving equal consideration to the work of both men and women throughout history. This has the potential to impact students in very profound ways.

Chapter Three- Methods

Introduction

My research project asks the following questions,

- How is the feminist perspective presented in the art history curriculum at CSUMB?
- Does the inclusion of women's contributions to the collective archive of important work have personal meaning for women students at CSUMB?
- Do women students at CSUMB draw a personal connection between themselves and the artists studied?
- If so, does this connection create personal validation of a student's own contributions to art?

Research Design

I used a descriptive case study to answer the questions above. CSUMB has several courses that contain a feminist perspective, but I looked at a brand new art history course offered this spring called Feminist Art: History and Theory, offered through the Institute for Visual and Public Art. I chose to use a case study method in which I looked at this case in order to get a clear sense of the value of this curriculum on this campus.

This particular form of research required me to describe the case in detail and then to conduct an analysis of the case through a feminist theory perspective. I chose this method of research because in order to answer my questions in depth, I needed to immerse myself in the study of this perspective. In order to get a true perspective of the meaning this type of curriculum has to students and instructors on this campus, I looked in depth at this example.

Setting

As this is a descriptive case study of a new CSUMB course, I observed in the classroom setting as a participant observer. I enrolled in the class and observed the lectures, discussions and student interactions with each other and the professors. The class observed was VPA 341, Feminist Art: History and Theory. This upper division course is designed for students in the major whose area of interest is feminist perspectives in the arts. The class was small, with about fifteen enrolled students. There were originally two male students in the class. One of them dropped it midway through and the other saw the course through to completion. The remaining students were all women of various ages, class levels, and experiences.

I kept a journal of written observations by date. I learned how the instructor was motivated by the subject matter to teach the course in an engaging way. Because she is a professional artist herself who regularly exhibits her installation work at various California galleries and art museums, she has a particular passion for non-traditional work. As a woman artist she is keenly aware of the obstacles woman face in the museum and gallery setting. She brought to the class an unusual combination of experience and education. Because of this, she is particularly passionate about the subject matter and teaches it from the perspective of a woman artist who must struggle to succeed professionally. I observed class discussions and student – teacher interactions. This helped me to discover how the students' experiences motivated them to learn more. I interviewed students and the instructor at various times as the course progressed, using both interview and questionnaires, in which students provided narrative responses to three key questions.

I believe these methods were the best ways to get answers to my questions because these methods allowed me to observe the classroom first hand and interview students involved in the course. These methods allowed me to hear the instructor's lectures and to analyze the course syllabi. The outcome of this in-depth look at this case and the analysis of it provided a very clear understanding of the value of feminist pedagogy, how it is presented and what relevance it has for students at CSUMB.

Methods of Data Collection

During the course of my study on the value of feminist perspective curriculum at CSUMB, I used descriptive case study to conduct an in-depth study of feminist perspective courses offered at CSUMB during Spring 2005.

My methods of data collection were as follows:

- Observations. I used the participant observer method of observation as described by Yin (2003). This method, according to Yin, allows the observer to “assume a variety of roles within a case study situation and may actually participate in the events being studied” (p. 93-94). I spent the entire semester in the class that I studied, as a student. I attended classes and observed the methods of the instructor. I observed how these methods motivated and engaged the students. I observed the student reactions to discussion and lectures. I coded these field notes according to themes that emerged as the class progressed.

I observed in the classroom twice a week. The class met on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. I was present at all but one or two class sessions over the course of the term. I wrote my notes in journal format. I recorded how

many students were present at each class meeting. I recorded whether the male students were present. I recorded the type of meeting that was taking place, whether we were meeting in the classroom or another location, whether it was a slide lecture or video, whether or not there was a guest lecturer present. I also recorded notes for the lecture or class activity itself and I noted which students responded and took part in any class discussion. I noted whether students seemed engaged or indifferent each day.

The advantage of observing as a participant observer was that I really was involved in each of the lectures and activities to the same degree as each student. If I had just questioned a student about a lecture or activity, I might not have come away with a thorough understanding, but because I was present for the activity, I knew more clearly what the student was describing. I had the opportunity by observing in the classroom to learn some of the things the students were learning for the first time, and share in the discovery of new information.

This seemed to work well for me, the students did not particularly seem aware that I was observing them. They knew I was there as a class member to observe the class, but they didn't seem concerned with how they behaved or whether they participated. They seemed to behave in typical student fashion regardless of my presence.

- Questionnaires. I prepared two three-question questionnaires, the first of which was distributed during class in about the fourth week of the term. It asked some baseline questions of the students about their understanding of art history and feminist theory, and their interest in this particular class. This was somewhat difficult because I had to remind certain students to remember to turn it in to me and I received them at various times throughout the first half of the semester. I distributed the second questionnaire towards

the end of the term to the remaining twelve students and received only two of those back. Because I only received two of the second questionnaire, I did not use it when coding the data.

- Interviews. I interviewed as many female students as I could find who had an interest in participating. The interviews asked roughly eight questions as a first interview and then another eight questions as a follow-up interview for each of the nine students who participated. I also interviewed the professor. These interviews were conducted at the convenience of the interviewee and were usually done in my office on campus, as most of the students found it convenient to meet me there as they were heading to other classes. Each student who participated was given a consent form to sign and also a consent form to agree to be audiotaped. Two of the interviewees declined to be audiotaped but did submit to interviews during which I took a great deal of notes. I conducted the first and second interviews of each student over the mid to late part of the term, with the intention of having a few weeks between interviews for each participant.

Participants/research subjects

My research subjects were selected at random as the class was small, starting out with fifteen students and by the middle of the term having only twelve. There were two male students, one of who dropped the class midway through. I chose not to include the one male student who completed the class as it seemed too narrow to get a good sense of the male perspective. Because there were not a lot of students, I worked with any of them that expressed an interest in participating. The students ranged in age from about twenty to about fifty-five. Their ethnic backgrounds were very diverse. I interviewed three white

females in their early twenties, one middle-aged white female, two Asian females in their mid-twenties and three Latinas between the ages of twenty-two to twenty-six.

I interviewed the professor to learn how the course came to be. I want to get a sense of the professors' passion for feminist pedagogy and why she feels it is valuable to teach at this institution.

I interviewed this group of nine female students in the class to learn from them why they were interested in the class. The student interviews shed light on their feelings about what they are learning, whether it was valuable and inspiring to them, and whether they might like to see more such classes offered. I conducted the interviews at various stages in the course of the semester, first conducting Part A of the interview and a few weeks later, conducting Part B. I gave the students in the class a questionnaire in the beginning weeks of the term to get a baseline idea of why they were in the class and what they hoped to gain from it. I collected those back within about three to four weeks. As mentioned above, I distributed a second questionnaire towards the end of the term but had a poor response and received back only two of the questionnaires.

Methods of data analysis

I analyzed the data by creating selective codes for the emerging themes and coding the data accordingly. For example, I saw a recurring theme in the interviews that indicates many female students were inspired to create their own art as they learned about the contributions of women to the world of art. Every time this theme emerged, I coded it and was then able to count how many recurrences of the theme there were and thereby get a sense of the role that theme plays in the value of the class. According to Coffey and

Atkinson, (1996), coding is a method of “assigning tags or labels to the data, based on our concepts. Essentially what we are doing in these instances is condensing the bulk of our data into analyzable units by creating categories with and from our data.” (p. 26)

I created the categories according to themes that arose in the data that corresponded to the thesis questions and tagged them with an appropriate code. I analyzed each of the readings used in each class session for recurring themes around feminist theory and how these readings impacted the students. I coded each set of data in a similar way. First I coded each of the ten initial questionnaires I received. I then moved into coding each of the two interviews that I conducted with each of the nine students. Following that, I went through my journal of observations and coded that information accordingly, and lastly, I analyzed the professor’s interview.

The social action component to my research will be to provide the Visual and Public Art Institute with the results of the study so that they can assess the value of the new class and the impact it had on their students. I plan to deliver a presentation to interested faculty here on the CSUMB campus in August of 2005.

Chapter IV -Results

Introduction

In order to answer the research questions, I analyzed the data as described in Chapter Three. From my analysis, I was able to identify five main categories under which I will report my findings. The categories I identified are as follows:

- The structure of the class
- Presentation of the feminist perspective in the classroom.
- Personal meaning for women students.
- Personal connections between students and artists.
- Validation of students' contributions to art

The structure of the class

VPA 341 Feminist Art: History and Theory was taught for the first time during the Spring 2005 semester. It was offered through the Visual and Public Art department in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. This is the first art history course offered at CSUMB that specifically critically analyzes the work of women artists who work from a feminist theory perspective. Because I enrolled in the class as a participant observer, I will first use some class observations to address the structure of the course and how the feminist perspective is presented.

Observations of class structure

I observed the class nearly every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon from 4:00 to 5:50 p.m. The class met in a small classroom located in Building 82 on the CSUMB

campus. The class was small with fewer than fifteen students, of whom all but two were female. The students ranged in age from their early twenties to mid-fifties. The professor was the director of the VPA program and also a working feminist artist. The class met at 4:00 p.m., but there was a general need to wait about ten minutes for students to straggle in on most days. Some of the students were VPA majors, but several were not and were taking the class for personal interest.

As I observed the class over the course of the semester, I noticed some changes from the beginning of the term to the end with regard to class size. We started out with about 15 students enrolled, 13 women and two men, and during the course of the term two female students and one male student dropped out. Another change during the course of the term was in regard to attendance. Students' attendance was high during the first few weeks of class, but dropped off close to spring break and was more sporadic thereafter. Some days there were as few as six students present and some sessions had all twelve. An average count for attendance was about nine students present per class meeting.

Another area in which I observed a change over the course of the term was in the area of class participation in a discussion setting. At first students were reluctant to speak during discussions, with maybe four or five of the students feeling confident enough to participate regularly. As the term progressed, all of the students began to participate and offer comments, and by the end, the group was clearly comfortable sharing and became more animated and insightful during discussions.

Student observations of class structure

Interview questions asked students to describe the class structure in terms of typical discussions, activities and lectures. Asked to describe a typical discussion, seven students of the nine interviewed agreed that a typical discussion would follow a videotape, a guest lecturer, or a slide lecture and would be aimed at discussing that topic as it relates to feminism and art. As stated by one participant, "A typical discussion usually follows a video or presentation and we are expected to share in the conversation." Another participant described a typical discussion in this way, "I think most of the class discussions we've had are when we've had the guest lecturers so depending its kind of on art history, women through art." A third student described her idea of the class discussion as follows, "A typical discussion might follow a reading or a guest lecture, or perhaps a videotape. Everyone would be encouraged to share their own insights or impressions of the topic. Guest lecturers talk about a variety of topics to include women's' images in art, or women's global issues. Videotapes are often on a particular artist."

Two of the students felt that discussions help the class understand the ideas of feminist theory as well as the art they were seeing. Said one participant, "Well, we talk about feminist issues and most of the time how they relate to the art world, not all the time. But I think both are very crucial because I think some of the students are just getting started with their own ideas of feminism, and so if you focus too much on the art stuff, you're not going to get enough of a grounding in feminist theory. I think its good that we do both." Another student explained, "We've been expected to participate in discussions regarding maybe the theories that the feminist artists present. I know a really good discussion we had was when we had the speaker talk about the looking glass,

looking at things through a male's perspective. How females tend to view themselves. That was a pretty good discussion." One student pointed out that the discussion in class helped to give everyone in class an equal footing. She said, "We started out with our definitions of feminism and if we thought we were feminists. We have round table discussions where everybody is in a circle. It makes people feel equal to one another. It's not a very typical classroom where you raise your hand. People are allowed to just speak and listen and everybody in that class listens to everybody else."

When asked to describe typical class activities, five of the nine participants felt that the creative art activities were meaningful to them and helped them to think about the concepts of feminism in a personal way. Said one student, "We do some creative art activities where we explore our own ability to create art based on something we feel is an issue for women or for each of us personally. We recently did a collage on the positive and negative aspects of the media images of women." Another student described her experiences with the activities in the following way, "The Feminist Genealogy and the Body Maps were two of the activities that meant something to me." When asked why this was meaningful to her, the student responded:

The Feminist Genealogy was an art project that allowed me to reflect back on my own personal connections to feminism. I can then apply it to my own life and see how the past generated my development. The Body Map was an art project that we did. We cut our body shapes out of paper and then filled it with what was important to each of us. This one really gives you a perspective of your own size and as an exercise it is valuable in college because so many college women have eating disorders and don't have an accurate personal image of their own bodies.

It's positive and empowering to look at your body because it is actually your own outline." Another student described them in this way, "We've done a couple of visual art projects such as collages or the Body maps in which we create a visual piece and use it to make a statement about media images of women, both positive and negative, as in the collage, and our own understanding of self through exploration of our body image, as in the Body Map.

When asked to describe typical lectures in the class, seven of the nine student participants described them as dealing with the feminist perspective, in some way. One student commented, "Well, they are not really typical, like everyday is different with some lectures by the instructor, but others are lectures from guest teachers. They all deal with some kind of woman's issue or situation or what women are doing in the art world." Another student described them in this way, "Women's issues having to do with the art community or globally. You know, how do you deal with women and violence, women trying to kind of further themselves in the art community. Looking at the media and how women are portrayed." A third student had this to say, "Well, guest lecturers they give lectures on more, let's see, we've had so many, more about the movements in feminism, and some of the technology that is being utilized by modern feminists and um thinking about global feminists and other movements in other countries and other problems that they have. They're similar to our own with regards to how females are treated in their society." Another student responded as follows, "A typical lecture might be a slide lecture wherein we look at the work of women artists and the instructor identifies them and gives us other information about each artist, such as her background, when her work

was done and during what period of time. Whether each artist was struggling with social or women's issues at the time and how her work expresses any feminist issues.”

Two of the nine talked more about the professor's or the guest speaker's lecturing style. One student said, “Slide shows or PowerPoint with slides usually. A lot of visual stuff. Not too much note taking. And a lot, especially when the professor actually lectures with us, it's a discussion kind of a lecture. Very involving of students and a bunch of our lecturers were like that as well. But obviously a lot of slide shows because its art that we're talking about.” The other said, “That's hard with all the guest lecturers, they have all had such different topics. But they all seem very good about gearing their discussion to the level of the class. I think they are very good about switching gears when they see the way we were responding and of pull out the topics that they knew we were more likely to discuss.” The majority of the participants expressed interest more in the content of the lectures, rather than in the lecturing style.

Students were also asked to sum up the class structure by indicating whether they would recommend the class to other students. All nine indicated they would recommend it. This is how one student responded to that question: “Yes, I would because I think it was a valuable class. We learned about artists that you don't normally hear about.”

Another stated, “Yes, I would because I think it's a non-threatening introduction to feminism and art. We had fun and insightful projects and good class discussion.” A third student had this to say, “Yes I would. I happen to live in a household full of feminist artists, well feminists and a couple of them are artists too so yeah I would recommend this course just taking a look at how women have been excluded from art a lot, but we're getting in there now, we're breaking through the glass ceiling and some of the art that

was shown was inspirational.” Another student stated, “Yeah, I would let people know about this class and tell them to take it just because it gave me more knowledge of myself as being either a feminist or not, understand my views more as a woman and to add along with that to learn about the practices and theories that other women had to go through while looking at art at the same time.”

All of the students indicated that they would recommend the class and a theme that ran through the answers suggests that the students found it insightful, non-threatening and inspirational.

When asked how they were doing in the class, at about two thirds of the way through, all nine of the students felt comfortable with their progress in the class and five of the nine students, mentioned that there were some structural difficulties with the class that made it seem unstructured or disorganized at times, but that they felt confident that they would be worked out in the future. Said one student, “ I liked the class. I think it was a little disorganized since it was the first time, but it will get better. I think I managed to complete everything but sometimes the due dates for things changed.” Another student described it as follows:

I thought well maybe because this is the first time it’s been offered, it was slightly disorganized. I was a little confused sometimes on what was due or what project was coming up. I’m also feeling a little hectic in that class because I’m looking at some of the things that were past due and I thought, ‘Wow, I didn’t do that’ but then again, I don’t know when she actually collected it. That the overall impression I have is just that it needs a little more organization, a little more finality, like if you’re gonna assign something, please collect it when it actually

was due. That's all, other than that it been a pretty fun class I think. It went very well; in fact I hope it continues to be offered. I think it has a lot to offer, especially to young artists or people just looking at feminism.

Another student had this to say, "I have a few things I still need to turn in. But overall the class is manageable it definitely is. I think that in the future once it gets a little more... once there's more guidelines for the class, cause I know it was the first semester and it was kind of put together with a lot of input I heard. I don't know, I think it has the potential to be a very informative class about feminist art and I think it does do its purpose of informing us of the feminist artists of the past. I think that was something I benefited."

Teacher Comments on class structure

The professor addressed the structure of the class during the course of the interview with her and made some reference to the need to make some structural changes. When the professor was asked if she would like to add any thoughts or comments at the end of her interview, she added the following remarks about the class structure:

I think that the critique of the class that I would make is structural and pedagogical.

- 1) Needs to be organized around small teams from the beginning.
- 2) There needs to be a textbook for the class.
- 3) The hands-on art activities should be more guided and more integrated into the readings and lectures.
- 4) The guest lectures should be kept to a minimum and be more integrated to the topic of art history.
- 5) The use of the journal/drawing book could be successful but I need to think out how to use it more consistently and effectively as a device in personal transformation, perhaps through assignments.

6) I need to deal with assignments and grading in a more timely fashion.

7) The thematic aspects of the class need to be strengthened.”

When the professor was asked; does this course incorporate gender issues in a way that helps students understand the need for feminist perspective courses? She responded in the following way: “I think it began to, but the course needs to be reorganized to accomplish this goal. Some of the students had less experience with the issues and others were more sophisticated so that course has to accommodate these ranges of knowledge. I think it began to identify some gender issues that had been raised in other classes and through the visual and expressive arts were perhaps more accessible.”

Overall the participants expressed general satisfaction with the class and the structure of the course but did express some need to review the structure for the next offering of the course. This particular observation addresses the issue of class structure and demonstrates that the students recognized that some structural changes to the course would allow for a little more organization, which in turn would enhance their ability to learn. The students indicated that this has the potential to help them further internalize and appreciate the course materials.

Presentation of the feminist perspective in the classroom

When students were asked on the questionnaire to describe their experiences with any feminist perspective classes, three of the respondents indicated that they had no experience with any feminist perspective courses prior to this one. One student said, “I actually haven’t had another class that offered a feminist perspective.” Another said, “Unfortunately, I’ve had no college classes reflecting a feminist perspective.” Another

responded in the following way, “I haven’t had many classes that have had a feminist perspective, but VPA 341 has been very positive about feminism.” Six of the respondents indicated that they had taken some feminist perspective classes both at CSUMB and elsewhere. One responded in the following way, “I’ve taken various classes with teachers who consider themselves feminists, and feel it has been empowering to see these women and men taking on these issues.” Another said this, “The only other feminist class I’ve taken was Women’s Issues Service Learning and it was a great course geared towards understanding ourselves as women, as well as our contributions to our community and society.” A third described her experience with women’s perspective coursework in the following way, “In my first year of college I took a Women in American History class at a junior college, I didn’t like the teacher so it wasn’t a great experience.”

Students in the class looked at the work of many feminist artists as well as hearing in lectures about what is going on with women around the world and in our society. The lectures also involved looking at the way the women’s body image is portrayed in the media. There were many ways that the class included a feminist perspective in the course materials. When asked to give an example of one thing they learned in the class that impacted them the most, five of the nine gave examples of the ways in which the feminist perspective structure of the course impacted them. One student responded, “I didn’t know before how many working women artists there are and what kinds of work they do. It was positive to learn that because I want to pursue an art career.” Another student said, “I learned a lot about myself and that I can make art about me, which I’ve always been so nervous about.” Another student gave the following example:

class that day. She discussed India's Bride Burning and Pakistan's Honor Killings. She brought them forward as global feminist issues, but also addressed the idea of the imperialist eye, meaning that we look at those things through our cultural lens and without an understanding of the culture in which they occur. We see them as barbaric and forget that many barbaric things still take place in our own country that shock people from other cultures, but we are sort of blind to those.”

A third student had this to say:

I did miss the lecture where they talked about the honor killings and whatnot and I heard it was really good. I was kind of sad because I couldn't make it that day. Although I missed it, I did end up researching it more myself just because I'm really interested in that. Not like it's a great thing but I'm interested in the fact that it still goes on and even recently I heard about something like that happening in Los Angeles so I'm surprised it would happen here too. You would think it's a third world country kind of thing. [Honor killings of women in Pakistan-Kathryn Poethig] Although I missed it, I think that one had a great impact. One of my roommates, she's also in the class, and she kept talking about it. That kind of motivated me to inform myself a bit more about it.”

Another student said:

Well I really enjoyed Kathryn Poethig's lecture. Um, and it left the impression on me that by, you know, she referred a lot to the bride burnings or the dowry murders in India, and when I look at that I'm like 'how can they do that, bla bla bla?' And then she kind of made that point to not do that, because to us that seems exotic to burn your bride, but to them they look at us and say, 'you shoot your

Often times it is the male mind that has the power to you know, present how we should view ourselves. And even I've recently noticed that it just seems like these plastic surgery shows are on all the time and just you start noticing things a bit more and not accepting them. It's definitely a negative, not theory, but it's negative towards women just in the sense that it's kind of like taking power away from the woman's point of view, since so many women are looking at themselves through a male point of view, but I think it was positive for me just because it empowered me with that knowledge. I think it really related to art just because so many ads and things we see, they are really directed with the male point of view.

Another student had this to say, "I really liked the lecture on the male gaze. Siobhan Arnold gave a guest lecture on the male gaze, but she very skillfully tied it in to art history and the portrayal of women by those artists considered the masters. I had been aware of it to a certain degree, but she made it connect in a way I hadn't considered."

When asked if there was a particular lecture that stood out for students, eight of the nine mentioned that the guest lecturers they liked, had addressed global feminism, the male gaze, or the way that women are portrayed in the media. One student answered this question in the following way: "The Kathryn Poethig lecture stands out for me as one of the better, more powerful lectures. I learned about media representation and cultural bias. She showed a video about the issue of bride burning in India and also a video about honor killings in Pakistan. The lecture made me think about how as Americans we look at things that happen around the world in an imperialistic way." Another student stated:

I really was fascinated with Kathryn Poethig's lecture. She didn't talk about women artists or art at all, but she brought a global feminist perspective to the

women?’ You know? Just to keep that culture and not to look down on it or be like oh the third world. The imperialist eye, keep it open, keep your mind open just in regards to looking at other cultures.

Students responded emotionally to the Kathryn Poethig lecture in that they indicated that they were surprised to learn that such treatment of women still existed globally and they tended to agree that it was important for them as culturally sensitive students to learn to view other cultures in an open-minded way. Students also responded emotionally to the lecture by Siobhan Arnold in which she presented a view of art history to the class that showed women as the subject in art and man as the observer and creator. Male artists created the artwork she shared during this lecture. Students agreed that they had not considered that men generally created the representation and the image of women. One student had this to say about that lecture, “When Siobhan Arnold came for her lecture. She is a teacher in VPA and she talked about the portrayal of women. She showed works from the masters and how male artists portray women as prostitutes and then paint them as beautiful and revered. She went on to show women making their own art.” Another participant stated:

I really liked Siobhan’s [Arnold] lecture. I know that the subject is something that she feels very strongly about. I’ve had other classes with her where she’s been able to touch on these things but because the class wasn’t about feminist issues she didn’t go as far. So it was really nice to see how in depth she got with the different artists throughout history. She covered so many years with just one lecture. It was pretty impressive. I think she relates well with the class, the class is pretty comfortable with her. She is able to talk about some of the touchier

subjects. Gender and sexuality or just sex, are subjects that some other teachers just kind of shy away from. She goes there.

A third student said, “I really enjoyed Siobhan’s [Arnold] lecture when she came in and talked about the male gaze and showed us the pictures. I felt like she was very well prepared, she connected with the class, and it was very engaging to watch that as opposed to [others]. The male gaze was a good lecture, it got everyone very involved, and people were getting it, and that I think was important.”

When the professor was asked, “can you give me some of your personal reasons for wanting to teach a course from a feminist perspective?” she responded in the following way, “We have felt from the beginning that VPA has a feminist approach and so it was only a matter of time that we would develop a course. Also many students had asked us and we have a higher number of women students and more women faculty than is traditionally found in CSUs. I also personally wanted to integrate the role of women of color in to feminist art history and feminist social history.” A follow-up question was asked of the professor:

“What do you see as the main impact such a course has on female students?”

She stated, “ I do not think this was an ideal beginning due to my recovery from surgery so I am speaking of ideally what a course like this can do. It is twofold:

- 1) Provide a consciousness raising capacity
- 2) Provide student strategies for using art as a tool for activism.”

In summary, the feminist perspective was presented in the class in several ways, through examples of artists’ work, through lectures addressing the portrayal of women in art and media, and through presentations about global women’s issues.

Six of the nine had some exposure to feminist perspective courses, mostly at CSUMB, while three had not. Five of the nine gave examples of how information presented in the course impacted them positively as women. The professor identified CSUMB's Visual and Public Art department as a largely feminist led department with an eye toward creating more feminist perspective curriculum which she felt would provide students with a greater understanding of feminist issues and encourage them to use art as a way to address feminist issues as activists.

Personal meaning for women students

In order to determine if the introduction of feminist art had a created personal meaning for women students, the participants were asked to give example of how the class had created personal meaning for them. All nine participants reported that learning about women in art history gave them a perspective on their own life that was meaningful. They tended to generally agree that learning this information helped them see that they were capable of contributing to the art world. They felt inspired and reflected a general sense of acceptance about a woman's ability to address feminist issues through art. One student said, "Well, by looking at women artists, I know that I can become an artist also, and I have new ideas about how to address women's issues in my work." Another shared, "Well, I paint and I have ideas of my own, but art is also defined through an academic approach so learning about other women artists and understanding their theories helps define what I want to do." A third student explored how the class had created inspiration for her. She stated:

That's actually a really a good question. It's given me like inspiration; really, this class has, because I am an artist. I'm trying to get into maybe doing public art,

like murals and paintings, I don't know how well that's gonna go, but um its kinda given me hope, it given me inspiration. I've seen some of the things that women are doing out there. It's very abstract at times, at other times very traditional like the painting styles. But I see them putting their shows up in like New York and places like that. It kind of overwhelms me, I'm like Oh my god, like how did they get there? but they got there from doing kinda what I'm doing, just going to school and making my own mark. So yeah.

Another student shared, "Though I have been somewhat familiar with many women artists and have had some background in art history, I learned about a lot of new artists that I had not been familiar with. I saw some work that has created some personal inspiration for me and I'd like to try some new ideas using some of the techniques I saw. I was also interested to learn how many more women are able to work in the art field and get their work out there in increasing numbers."

Students were also asked to give an example of a class activity that had personal meaning for them. Seven of the participants cited individual or group art projects as the part of the class that was most meaningful. Two other students cited guest lectures as the part of the class that was most meaningful. One student said, "We did an art project called the Feminist Genealogy that described ourselves and how we developed as feminists. Some people did a poster or collage. I did a collage with photos and found objects. It allowed me to look at my own family history and see that other women in my family are not feminists, but it showed me how certain people in my life inspired me to believe that as a woman I might have to work harder to prove myself, whether they were feminists or not." Another student said, "The Feminist Genealogy and the Body Maps

were two of the activities that meant something to me. The Feminist Genealogy was an art project that allowed me to reflect back on my own personal connections to feminism. I can then apply it to my own life and see how the past generated my development. The Body Map was an art project that we did. We cut our body shapes out of paper and then filled it with what was important to each of us. This one really gives you a perspective of your own size and as an exercise it is valuable in college because so many college women have eating disorders and don't have an accurate personal image of their own bodies. It's positive and empowering to look at your body because it is actually your own outline."

A third student gave this example:

I really like the Body Map. I had a lot of fun with the Body Map. I've been going through a lot of personal issues so for me to be able to apply that on paper in relevance to my body it was really nice for me and it was also the first time I really painted something for my own sake. I normally don't deal with paint unless I absolutely have to and I just decided, I got a glass of wine and a paintbrush and I said I'm going to paint. I don't know why, but I wanted to paint it. Then I took more of the other stuff I've been doing, more "collage-y" type stuff and some of the 3-dimensional themes and added that so that I could make it more my own. But I had so much fun with that. And actually, when I get it back I'm going to continue to add to it. I want to keep playing with it. It's a lot of fun. It was something I'd never taken the time to do, to really look at how can I express myself, who I am, but in relation to my body and I thought that was something I never would have taken the time to do had it not been presented and I really liked it. Sort of as a feminist, body issues are something I feel strongly about, having a

lot of friends who have dealt with eating disorders, and who are still dealing with eating disorders, or just body image in general. It something I feel very strongly about.

Another student responded as follows:

I liked the group project in which each group was expected to create an art piece on campus that addressed some women's issue. I was in the group that did the Body Maps, which we put on display in the Black Box Cabaret for the Sex Show. The Sex Show is a yearly event put on by the Empower Club, a club that addresses women's issues such as domestic violence, rape, women's health issues and others. Our Body Maps were painted and decorated to bring attention to the issue of Human Papillomavirus or HPV, a form of STD that can result in cancer of the cervix. I really learned a lot with that.

Two students cited lectures as meaningful to them. One said, "Actually just our last guest lecture who is Stephanie Johnson, has been my teacher for 4 or 5 classes. Because I know her I felt extremely comfortable with participating. I'm a shy person in class who doesn't always participate, but she made it really comfortable for me." The other responded as follows:

When Kathryn Poethig was there. Before she came in she thought we would have read the news article, but some people didn't so she explained what her articles were about and tried to help us foster ideas about how bride burning kind of typical... not typical, but like trying to compare two different nations, and how there isn't very many differences between... bride burning isn't very common here, but it's seen as something really horrible here, but they look at us like...like incest

is bad and it happens there quite a lot. Just trying to find ways to tell people about other nations and trying to take things into consideration. We had a discussion about that in little groups and that was the one that struck me as something to come to terms with.”

When the professor was asked, “Do you believe that feminist perspective course in art history has personal meaning for female students? She responded in the following way:

I believe all education must be meaningful to students and that can only happen when we teach through concepts and then give students the opportunity to apply those concepts to their own lives. I think the area of popular media image analysis from a feminist perspective is especially useful as consumers of media and as people affected by the construction of non-feminist imagery about women. I am hopeful that they will take away some of the feminist education goals to their work as teachers, artists, parents and colleagues.”

In summary, it can be said that all of the women students agreed that there were aspects of the class and the class activities that helped them to see feminist issues as personal issues that were meaningful to each of the students, and that they could apply the learning to their own lives. The professor felt that students must always find meaning in their education, and her feeling is the more they do, the more likely they are to apply it to their art, their lives and their careers in life.

Personal connections between students and artists

To determine if students made personal connections between their own lives and the lives of the artists they studied, the participants were asked to describe any ways in which they felt a personal connection between themselves and the artists studied. Eight of the nine responded that they made such connections. Four of the eight could name one or more particular artists that they felt an affinity with, and four made more general connections with regard to themes and practice in feminist art and theory. One participant felt she could not answer the question as she did not create any kind of art, but just had an interest in art, though she was able to make a cultural connection to her own Mexican heritage when she gave some thought to her ideas about feminist theory. One the question about personal connection she said, “ That’s a tough one, I’m not so sure because I don’t really do any artwork for the most part. I mean I can be creative, but I don’t spend a lot of time constructing art projects. I don’t think I can really answer that one. I’m just interested in art, but I’m not really an artist.” When asked about her understanding of feminist theory she said:

I understand feminist theory to mean different things according to who you talk to. I think that’s very important that not every body will define it the same way. But I think the bottom line is an empowerment of women. And feminist art is just a reflection of that in craft or whatever it may be. I know I’ve seen it in simple paintings or like a blanket that somebody made. It has a feminist perspective to it like traditionally like the knitting and crafts and that sort of thing isn’t really viewed as art but I think it counts under a feminist theory that a woman takes her time to you, know make this object that will stay in the family, so I think that’s

how it could translate. And also it kind of reminds me of... I think I read a long time ago about kind of, I don't know if you've heard about Ballet Folklorico, about making the dresses and the actual outfits and that in itself is an art that, although very many of the women who make these dresses haven't attended school, or they have no real degree or background or any sort of a certification to make these things, but its an art. Just these little things are taken for granted in a way. But that it is very complicated to make the skirts and the shirts. That's also kind of a way of having your feminist theory apply to that.

Of the four who named particular artists, one said, "Well, we've hit on some themes and topics like women's rights and cultural issues. I like Ana Mendieta and I could identify with Hung Liu because she lets her paint drip. I use drips in my work." Another described her connections this way, "Yeah, well of the many artists that she's shown us, I've felt a little bit of a connection with Ana Mendieta. I really liked her performance art and some of the simple things that she done, you know like showing her hands and going out in nature and leaving her imprint with nature. I actually felt quite an affinity with that because I grew up on a farm and I really appreciate nature and I kind of feel real attracted to it and to see her working with nature was real inspiring." The third student responded as follows:

I've been toying with the idea of performance art. It's something I've always... well I used to be a theatre major way back when so performance isn't that far out of my grasp. I've done some experimental theatre but never quite performance art. It's been a long time since I've taken a basic art history class and been in contact with these kinds of artists. When they talk about either performance or installation

art those kind of things are really fascinating to me. I don't know if I will ever go as far as Kiki Smith and Carol Lee Schnieman and Karen Findley who are the pretty extreme performance artists. I don't think I would ever go that far, but I admire that so much. I love that most people go why are they doing that? It doesn't make any sense. They start to think about it and that's the whole point. That's what I kind of strive for. I want people to walk away with questions, because it just forces them to think about it. I want to give them the direction to find the answers but I don't necessarily want to just hand them the answer. I want people to kind of have to work for it a little bit and so I think a lot of performance artists and installation artists too, I can't remember the woman's name [Ann Hamilton]. She did the Venice Biennale with the words in Braille on the wall. She had words in Braille on the wall and dropped a bright pink powder from the corners of the ceiling and as the powder fell, it would highlight the Braille. And the Braille was excerpts from I think Browning poems, I can't remember. A poet. But you wouldn't know it by looking at it. You'd have to find out and then you'd have to find the book of poetry to read. So she takes you there, or she'll lead you there halfway, but you have to go the other half. But as a viewer, its more fulfilling if you have to work at it yourself. That's what I really, really admire.

The fourth described her connections as follows, "Yes, one artist we looked at was Carmen Lomas Garza, she is a painter who also writes and illustrates children's books. I felt a strong connection between this artist and myself because I plan to use my art skills to illustrate and write books for children. Another artist I connected with was Hung Liu. She paints large portraits of women and other people important in her ethnic background.

The paintings are hauntingly beautiful and give me some ideas on new projects I'd like to try."

Of the four who described a more general connection, one stated, "Well, I really don't consider myself a good artist. I think I am still learning, but I'm glad to learn about the other artists because seeing all the different ways they express themselves through art helps me to see my own work as art." Another put it this way, "I guess in the way that it kind of goes back to what I create or you know I think its what most people create can be very personal and very meaningful to you, but sometimes that can translate and be very powerful for other people as well. So kind of in that connection I can tell some of the things that other artists that we've looked at have done are probably very personal to them and have deep meaning but still kind of have universal deep meaning across, you know." The third student said, "Not anything very specific, but because we did learn about so many different women artists and how they did their artwork, it definitely gave me ideas on how to create my own artwork and how, again, to create work about myself, which has always been something I had a problem doing. So in that way, yes, but nothing very specific, like one specific artist that really struck me in any way." The fourth one summed it up in this way, "A personal connection? I don't know. I wouldn't be able to name an artist, but there are some similarities like thought processes or things we go through to get to the end product. Not one artist personally sticks out in my head, but I pull a lot of things from them."

To summarize this section it can be said that the majority of the students felt a connection to either specific artists they studied or with some of the general principles and themes in the art they looked at. The professor explained that her goal would be that

once students make the connections, they develop a passion for their own work and “will take away some of the feminist education goals to their work as teachers, artists, parents and colleagues.

Validation of students' contributions to art

To understand how female students felt about their own contributions to the arts, the interview questions were geared toward gaining a perspective on what kind of work students do and how they feel about their own work. Many of the answers to interview questions already discussed for the other topics, also apply to this question and help to provide some insight into whether the students feel more confident about their work.

Students were first asked to give examples of their own visual artwork, or their contributions to the arts, and then they were asked how they felt about their own work. Eight of the nine participants indicated that they were artists, and four of those eight indicated that they still felt their skills were at a student level. Said one student, “I like to do public art projects, I like to do installations that are in a public venue.” When asked how she felt about her work she had this to say, “I’m really critical of my own work, I’m just learning.” Another responded as follows, “I paint and write poetry. I’m a creative writing major.” This student indicated that she got satisfaction from her work. She said, “I enjoy what I do, but I could improve. I do get a sense of satisfaction with some of my work.” A third had this to share:

Last semester I did something, you know, we had the elections coming up last semester and that was a big thing. And so Johanna [Poethig] charged us with the, we had to do something political and it actually turned out very well and it had a

statement in it that a lot of people were just like ‘oh wow that’s really true’. It was up in the BBC for awhile and I had written on this piece “Its easy to kill when you don’t have to look each other in the eye” and it had a couple soldier’s faces and they had no eyes, instead they just had these bloody sockets. It was supposed to be shocking and it had the Iraq flag and the American flag being separated by a mushroom cloud and behind the soldier’s faces were shadows of soldiers throwing grenades or shooting. That was the first piece I ever had up on display anywhere and it turned out very well, and it did leave an impression on people who saw it. So I was really proud of that. It was very meaningful. I really like the social justice aspect of doing art.

She indicated that she was still learning. She said, “I feel like I’m just getting started. I’m still definitely an amateur and I’m still trying to develop my own particular style. I’m experimenting with different styles. I’m experimenting with different colors like pastels or fiery reds or things like that. I use a lot of red actually in my paintings. I’m actually working on a new piece. It’s a little erotic and I’m going to put it in the Erotic Art Show next year. It’s just more about liberation, actually.” Another responded in this way, “I’m working on a piece right now that’s going in the Monterey Airport which I’m very excited about. It’s my first show so I’m kind of nervous because I want it to be great so I’m trying not to put too much pressure on it. It’s a sculpture. Its called “Chair” you basically can make a chair anything you want it to be. It is student and professional work and I think it will run about three months.” When she was asked how she felt about her work she responded as follows, “Its very, very mental. It’s kind of learning new

strengths, weakness, but just kind of playing around with different kinds of mediums and materials. Just need to find what works and see what I like to do.”

Overall, of the eight students who indicated they were artists, four of them felt they were developing as artists while four of them felt more confident about their work.

The one student who indicated that she didn’t consider herself an artist said, “Well, contributions to arts? I have a respect for the arts. Well, I work with kids, for the Boys and Girls Club and I try and have activities regarding...[art].” On further reflection it did occur to her that she was learning to write poetry, and was starting to gain a sense of self-confidence about that. When asked how she felt about her work she said, “Well, actually, I am in a poetry class right now. I signed up today to do the reading for the class so I have to read my piece to them. I generally like to keep it to myself, but I think it’s a good way to share your thoughts with one another. I would normally keep things to myself, but I’m noticing that I’m more willing to be more open about it cause what’s the point of hiding it?”

Throughout the interview sessions, students made several references about the sense of validation that they gained regarding their own work. Seven of the nine expressed a sense of inspiration from viewing the work and learning about the artists, because as artists themselves it helped to validate for them that it was possible to become successful as an artist. One student stated, “I’m glad to learn about the other artists because seeing all the different ways they express themselves through art helps me to see my own work as art. I didn’t know before how many working women artists there are and what kinds of work they do. It was positive to learn that because I want to pursue an art career.”

Another said:

It's given me like inspiration, really, this class has because I am an artist. I'm trying to get into maybe doing public art, like murals and paintings, I don't know how well that's gonna go, but um its kinda given me hope, its given me inspiration. I've seen some of the things that women are doing out there. It's very abstract at times, at other times very traditional like the painting styles. But I see them putting their shows up in like New York and places like that. It kind of overwhelms me, I'm like Oh my god, like how did they get there? but they got there from doing kinda what I'm doing, just going to school and making my own mark.

A third student put it this way, "[This class has] just given me more of an insight into what women in this field have done... I think its great that it exposes you to all those kinds of things and you can see where they've gone, and then if you're interested you can do the same thing or you can gain ideas and take it another way." Another student said, "Because we did learn about so many different women artists and how they did their artwork, it definitely gave me ideas on how to create my own artwork. I feel like women everywhere should be somehow involved in making it a better place for women. When I'm an art teacher, I will make sure everybody is heard and everybody is equal." Another participant expressed how important feminist theory had become to her as result of the class. She also indicated that her future work would be influenced by what she learned. She said, "Feminist theory will play a great role in my continued professional life. When I become a teacher, it will drive any topic I'm exploring with my class as a way to encourage female students to participate. I will be sure that as we look at different topics,

we will be including the perspective of the female contribution to history, art history, whatever it may be.”

In summary, it can be noted that all of the nine participants indicated that they did some kind of creative work, whether it was poetry or visual art, and, though about half of them indicated they were still honing their craft, they all suggested through their interview answers that they came away from the class with more confidence, more ideas, or a new commitment to including feminist perspectives in the work they do in the future.

Chapter V - Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

As a woman with a desire to work as an artist and teacher, I have been dismayed to learn that its much more difficult to be taken seriously in the field than it is for a man. Students of traditional art history classes come away with the continued image that they get from traditional history courses that the white male experience comes from a place of power and that the women's perspective is secondary and insignificant. Students of the arts today might get from this a feeling of insecurity and lack of confidence in their own abilities to create important art, based solely on their gender. Feminist art historians and scholars have researched and critically analyzed art throughout history to demonstrate that societal roles and historical situations have played a role in the absence of women artists, as well as in the representations of women in the male dominated imagery of the art world. Scholars have brought work to the forefront to show examples of very fine and important work by women, and various professors have remodeled classes to include the women's perspective in art history.

This has served to help change the perspective of students who are studying art and art history and allows them to learn to value a wider range of work. In recent years coursework has begun to include a greater range of artists in what we consider important art. Traditional classes still exist in which the white Euro American male perspective is still valued over that of others.

It might be considered that creating art curriculum that includes the voices of women of all backgrounds would encourage the appreciation students have of other

artistic perspectives and might allow female students to gain an equal footing in their confidence in the competitive world of art. CSUMB is an educational institution that places a great value on presenting the alternative perspective in many of its courses. Course often present a multicultural perspective and include issues of race, class, and gender. For the first time this past spring, the Visual and Public Art department has presented a class that specifically represents the feminist perspective in art history. To learn the answers to the guiding questions below, I conducted a descriptive case study of the course.

- How is the feminist perspective presented in the art history curriculum at CSUMB?
- Does the inclusion of women's contributions to the collective archive of important work have personal meaning for women students at CSUMB?
- Do women students at CSUMB draw a personal connection between themselves and the artists studied?
- If so, does this connection create personal validation of a student's own contributions to art?

The answers to these questions can be found as one looks at some of what the literature has to say about the inclusion and absence of women in art history and some of the studies that have been done with regard to changing curriculum to include women, and the observations, student interviews, and professor interviews done during the course of this study.

Discussion

Guiding question number one

- How is the feminist perspective presented in the art history curriculum at CSUMB?

The literature addressed how the feminist perspective is often absent from typical art history coursework and how some professors have sought to include it in higher education classrooms. Pollack, (1998), contends that because women spent the majority of their time working in the domestic realm, they simply didn't have the capacity to become artists. Nochlin, (1998), sums up that women are not absent from art history, but are represented more in imagery than as creators. How then does the women's perspective begin to come in to play in the classroom? Broude and Gerrard (1994), discuss how the rise of the women's movement during the 1970s gave rise to the feminist art movement, which would serve as a new way to look at art history. Following the movement of the 1970s, more teachers at the higher education level were willing to make curricular changes to include the women's perspective. For example, Dufresne, (1994), discusses ways she has found to change the traditional art history courses she teaches to focus on women in art.

The study shows that the feminist perspective is presented in the CSUMB course through the use of three methods of instruction. First, participant observation in the classroom showed that students studied the work of feminist artists through the use of slide lectures and learned their histories, students also attended guest lectures dealing with women's issues as they related to art and as they related to a global feminist perspective. Another way in which the feminist perspective was presented to students

was through the use of art projects that allowed students to personalize the information they were learning and reflect it in projects that were personally meaningful. When asked to describe lectures, students generally indicated that the professor and guest speakers would lecture about women's art history or women's issues and several of the lectures were particularly eye-opening for them as they covered topics the students had not known about before. When looking at slide lectures of the feminist art, the participants indicated in several instances that they were surprised to learn how many successful women artists there were. Students spoke about projects in ways that suggested they enjoyed applying their new understanding of feminist issues to the art projects they were doing in the class.

Guiding question number two

- Does the inclusion of women's contributions to the collective archive of important works have personal meaning for women students at CSUMB?

The literature addressed the need for authors and teachers to include the feminist perspective in the classroom and the potential it has for helping students to see art history in a new way. For example, *The Guerilla Girls* (1998), give examples of many usually unknown but very talented and prolific women who created art in various styles throughout history. They suggest that we rethink the way art is taught and allow our women students to be exposed to women artists. According to Kaufman and Scott (1993) as radical feminist theory emerged there was an attempt by feminist scholars to establish a collective history of women in art. The note that as feminist historians came to the universities, other areas of academic study caught their attention and they began to suggest that women students would find feminist perspective courses meaningful across

disciplines. According to Coulter, Hedges and Goldenberg (1990), faculty who participated in their study, which revised existing English and literature coursework to include a women's perspective, found that students responded positively to the new information and became more involved and related the material to their own lives.

The student's interviews indicated that all nine of the participants felt that the class had created personal meaning for them in their lives as artists or as students. They indicated a desire to learn more about other women artists, they felt that seeing the work made them feel more like they had the same opportunities and they indicated that art projects they did in the class were very personal to their own situations as women, and therefore very meaningful.

Guiding question number three

- Do women students at CSUMB draw a personal connection between themselves and the artists studied?

The literature addresses how some studies in which feminist perspective was included in the classroom helps students to have a greater appreciation for women artists and a greater understanding of why this needs to be present in the curriculum. For example, Dufresne (1994) notes that students in her feminist perspective art history classes gain a greater understanding of women's roles through history. She notes that students find the courses very rewarding and gain a greater understanding of art as a form of expression and they tend to have fewer notions of gender limitations. According to Witcombe (1995), students in traditional courses weren't making connections about

women's roles in art and society. His students had a better grasp of the roles that women played in the creation of art.

The interview questions were designed to learn whether women students made connections about their own work as they studied the work of women in the art world. Eight of the nine participants felt that indeed they had made such connections and of the eight, four named one or more artists with whom they had drawn a connection, while the other four felt that the connection they made was more about ideas and they did not name any particular artists. The professor shared her desire that the students will make the connections and then take them with them, as they become teachers, or artists, or parents.

Guiding question number four

- If so, does this connection create personal validation of a student's own contributions to art?

The literature addresses this in a more limited way than the other questions, but one example is Sonnenstrahl, (2002), who discusses how deaf women artists have started arts collectives and that as more deaf women artists realize that they share the same experiences, they work together in the collective to make art about their unique experience as deaf persons in society.

The interviews shed some very interesting information on this question. All nine of the participants indicated that they felt more confident about their own contributions to the arts and they all indicated in some way that after having taken this class they knew they would be able to make art, or that it helped them to view their own work as art. Participants noted that it was a positive experience because they wanted to be artists as

well. Some indicated the class brought up new ideas, or that they now hoped to help other women in the future. They indicated the class gave them hope or inspiration and that they hoped to take the feminist perspective with them in their professional lives once they left school.

I felt that another important theme that had surfaced throughout the study and in the data was the discussion of the structure of the class. In several instances, students referred to class structure as something that played a role in their ability to complete the class successfully. When asked if they would recommend the class, though all the participants said they would, they also all indicated the need for the class to gel or they felt some minor changes to structure should take place to make it better. The instructor indicated in her interview that she had some ideas about structural changes and she indicated that this would make the class more functional for the next time it is offered.

Based on the data I collected and my observations in the class I feel that this study showed that women students do value the chance to learn what other women have done in the past, particularly in a discipline in which they have a special interest. I felt that this showed in the artwork that the students did during the course of this class. They really put their feelings into their work and made beautiful and meaningful pieces. I think this reflects that the class did indeed inspire students and helped some students settle on what they wanted to do with their art.

Recommendations

Women who have a desire to compete in the art world and who intend to pursue an arts education in a higher educational setting need to know that there are fewer obstacles to this goal than those that confronted generations of women before them. They need to believe that their gender doesn't hinder their opportunities for success. They should leave school with the confidence and the ability to compete alongside of men in the art world and know that they will be taken seriously as contributors. When they receive instruction that includes women's contributions, it can validate their own ability to contribute in the art world, just as multicultural perspective courses positively represent a diverse student population. The VPA 341 course offered this spring at CSUMB went a good distance in its goal of bringing the perspective of women artists to the students in the class. What follows are some recommendations for the class itself that I believe will address some of what was perceived by the students in the study as disorganization or structural difficulties as discussed in the previous chapter.

Class recommendations-theory

During the course of my observations in class I had noticed that the students were very excited to learn about women in the arts, but demonstrated varying degrees of understanding about feminist theory. Some indicated a strong understanding of the ideas behind feminist theory, but during discussions, it was clear that many lacked an in-depth comprehension of feminist theory and were largely unfamiliar with feminist art historians, scholars, and theorists whose philosophies drove some of the class discussion. Students were asked early in the term to read and analyze a Griselda Pollack article from

her book, *Vision and Difference* (1998). The article centered on feminist theory and how it is informed by Marxist theory as it relates to whether art as a commodity is set by the economic standards that create supply and demand. The students collectively disliked this assignment and during my research I observed their discussion of it. They simply didn't understand it and therefore felt dislike for the reading. A basic introduction to feminist theory needs to be made in the early part of the term in order to ease those students into it, who have not had prior experience.

Class recommendations-texts

I would recommend including textbooks in the class as a way to introduce students to theory. One book I would recommend is *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* by Christine Battersby (1989). In this book, Battersby discusses the notion of genius from a historical perspective as early as ancient Rome. This would help students to grasp some of the earliest ideas that inform more comprehensive feminist theory texts today. It 'sets up' some of the ideas from their beginnings so that students have an underlying sense of why the development of feminist theory occurred. After some initial readings in this book, students would more likely be ready to tackle more complicated authors, such as Pollack (1998).

I would further recommend an art history text that could help students understand how women came to be absent from the mainstream texts. One book that would serve well is *A World of Our Own: Women as Artists Since the Renaissance* by Frances Borzello (2000). This book gives a little more historical background on women working as artists from a much earlier time period than was studied in the class. The class was

concerned with presenting only women artists who worked from a feminist perspective by addressing women's issues in their art. I feel that students would have a greater understanding of why contemporary feminist artists make art about such issues, if they had a broader background in art history itself. After an introduction to some of this background art history, students could then be immersed in more contemporary feminist art history as discussed in other texts, such as *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact* by Norma Broude and Mary D. Gerrard (1994).

Class recommendations –projects

During the course of the term, students were asked to complete several individual visual art projects and also to participate in one group project. Students responded well to these and the outcomes of their projects reflected their understanding of feminist theory and how they might apply it to their own lives in the context of creating art. Though students had trouble expressing an understanding of feminism and art through writing assignments, they seemed to have less trouble expressing their understanding through artistic means.

In the previous chapter, I noted that the professor discussed in her interview her feeling that students should be placed in groups earlier in the term. I would agree with this assessment and would recommend that students be broken into groups earlier in the term in order to create more of a group identity for the projects they would be doing. I would also recommend that the groups be assigned some reading and discussion projects that they could present to the class in addition to one large art project. This would allow

them to do more group discussion in which they would gain insight from their peers and help each other understand the material. I would recommend continuing with the individual art projects, as they seemed to be particularly meaningful to the students as a way to express their feelings as women.

Class recommendations-guest lecturers

From the data gathered during interviews, it was clear that students valued the presence of guest lecturers and for many; these were the highlight of the class. There were a couple of lecturers who presented material that students did not necessarily feel was relevant, but overall, the lectures were successful in creating an atmosphere in which the students felt safe and motivated to discuss the material. I would recommend that those lectures continue for the most part, but I would recommend that a follow-up assignment occur after each one. These could be individual or group discussions or writings, but would give the student the chance to reflect back on what was presented and to demonstrate to the professor their understanding of the topic.

Further action

I will be presenting my findings to the faculty in the Visual and Public Art department in August of 2005. Though I have had several conversations with the professor regarding class structure and recommendations for the class, this will allow me to give a more formal presentation to interested faculty members and to share my in-depth interviews with the students. The faculty will be able to analyze the data and make additional recommendations about the class from the student perspective.

A further study of the class after some changes have been made should be done. It will be offered again in Fall 2005 with some structural changes and it would be interesting to observe how the changes impact the students' ability to understand the material. For such a study, I would recommend further observation of the class. I would also recommend a more substantial survey or questionnaire that could be given in class. Because students are reluctant to take on any more work than is assigned, with good reason, it was difficult to collect such questionnaires. Having it filled out as an in-class project would certainly help with the collection of data. Interviews with students could be done out of class, but it could help with the collection of data to offer some incentive to participate such as extra credit points. I would recommend including the male perspective in the survey and interviews for any further studies of the course and this might be accomplished as more male students enter the course as it becomes more established.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that there is value to women students in courses that include the feminist perspective. By offering such courses at CSUMB across disciplines and by evaluating such course for impact to students we can ensure that the needs of the female student are being addressed. Women need to know that there have been women before them who have successfully navigated the professional waters in art as well as in other disciplines. When courses like the one studied are the norm in other institutions of higher learning, they can be a real catalyst for changes in the way women approach their professional careers.

Appendix: A- Questionnaires 1 and 2

Feminist Art History and Theory at California State University Monterey Bay: A Descriptive Case Study of a New Course

Questionnaire 1

Dear Student Participant,

You are being asked to answer the following questions since you are a female student enrolled in this course. Your answers will make up a part of the data gathered in this study. Your participation is very much appreciated, however, it is not required.

Please answer the following questions.

I am a VPA major. Circle one.

Yes

No

Please describe your current understanding of art history.

Please describe your experiences with other college level courses at CSUMB or elsewhere that offered a feminist perspective.

Please explain why you felt inclined to enroll in this course.

Feminist Art History and Theory at California State University Monterey Bay:
A Descriptive Case Study of a New Course

Questionnaire 2

Dear Student Participant,

You are being asked to answer the following questions since you are a female student enrolled in this course. Your answers will make up a part of the data gathered in this study. Your participation is very much appreciated, however, it is not required.

Please answer the following questions.

Please describe your understanding of art history after having taken this class.

Please briefly discuss your favorite part of this class and why.

Please explain what meaning this class had for you, and describe how you made personal connections to the artists you studied.

Appendix B – Student Interview Questions Part A and Part B

Feminist Art History and Theory at California State University Monterey Bay: A Descriptive Case Study of a New Course

Interview Questions for Students in the Course –Part A

Can you describe your typical day at school as a student?

Can you describe any extracurricular activities or clubs that you participate in on campus?

Can you describe for me everything that takes place during the VPA 341 class period in a typical day?

Please describe for me a typical class discussion in VPA 341, in which students are expected to participate.

Can you tell me about some typical class activities that take place in VPA 341?

Can you describe for me what a typical lecture in VPA 341 might consist of?

Can you give me an example of a class activity in VPA 341 that you have participated in that was meaningful to you?

In what ways did you find it meaningful to you as a student?

Can you give me an example of how this class has created meaning for you in your own life, as a female student with an interest in the arts?

Can you describe for me some of your experiences with other classes at CSUMB?

Can you describe for me any experiences you have had with this professor prior to taking this course?

Can you describe any ways in which you feel a personal connection between your own work and the work of the artists you are studying?

Several terms have been used in the course material, such as “feminist theory”; can you describe for me what you understand this term to mean?

Feminist Art History and Theory at California State University Monterey Bay: A Descriptive Case Study of a New Course

Interview Questions for Students in the Course –Part B

Can you describe in a brief summary how the course of the Spring 05 term went for you with regard to classes, completion of work and achievements?

Can you describe in a brief summary how the VPA 341 class went over the course of the Spring 05 term with regard to completion, completion of assignments, and overall impression of the class?

Please give me an example of a class activity that stood out for you the most in terms of creating personal meaning for you.

Please describe the activity and explain how it was meaningful for you.

Please give me an example of a class activity that stood out most for you in terms of dislike or discomfort.

Please describe the activity and explain why you felt discomfort or did not particularly care for the activity.

Can you describe for me an experience you had during the course of the term with a guest lecturer?

Please describe the lecture and the impression or impact it left on you as a student.

Can you give me an example of one thing you learned in the class that had the greatest impact on you either in a negative or positive way?

Would you recommend this class to other students?

Please explain why or why not.

Can you give me an example of some of your own contributions to the arts?

Can you describe for me how you feel about your own work?

Can you explain your understanding of feminist theory at this point in time and explain the role it plays in your continued studies?

Appendix: C – Interview Questions for the Professor

Feminist Art History and Theory at California State University Monterey Bay: A
Descriptive Case Study of a New Course

Interview Questions for the Professor

Are you the creator of this curriculum?

When did you decide to become a professor and teach at the higher education level?

Can you give me an example of the type of courses you took in art history when you were in college?

Can you give me some of your personal reasons for wanting to teach a course from a feminist perspective?

What do you see as the main impact such a course has on female students?

Does this course incorporate gender issues in a way that helps students understand the need for feminist perspective courses?

How do you see your role as an art professor in advancing gender equitable art education at CSUMB?

In what ways does your curriculum help students connect with their own experiences?

Do you believe that feminist perspective course in art history has personal meaning for female students?

If so, in what ways do you believe this meaning affects their commitment to their own educations?

Would you like to include any other thought or comments?

Appendix D – Consent Forms

Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, CSUMB CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Project: Feminist Art History and Theory at California State University
Monterey Bay: A Descriptive Case Study of a New Course

I would like you to participate in a research study conducted by myself, Judith Swartz, in the MA-Education Department to be used for a thesis at California State University, Monterey Bay.

The purpose of the study is to examine the structure of VPA 341 with regard to the study of women artists, and to examine the impact feminist perspective curriculum has on female students as they pursue their own educational or career goals at CSUMB.

You were selected as a participant in this study because you are a female student enrolled in a feminist perspective arts class at CSU Monterey Bay

The benefits of participating in this project include the opportunity to give feedback about a new course offered at CSUMB.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to fill out two questionnaires, one in the early weeks of the spring 2005 term and another in the final week of class. You may also be asked to answer some individual interview questions twice during the course of the term. The individual interviews will be conducted after class, or at some other convenient time in an on-campus location.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your written or witnessed verbal permission or as required by law. Written questionnaires and interviews will not be identified by name. Information will not be released to any other party. Individual interviews will be audiotaped and you will have the right to review and edit the tapes. No other parties will have access to the tapes. They will be transcribed into written format and erased at the close of the study.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you. You can choose whether or not to be in the study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

If you want to know more about this research project or have questions or concerns, please email me at Judith_swartz@csumb.edu

The project has been reviewed and accepted by California State University, Monterey Bay. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

If you have questions about CSUMB's rules for research, please call the Committee for Human Subjects Chair, Linda Rogers, CSUMB School of Education, 100 Campus Center, Building. 15, Seaside CA 93966, 831.582.5080.

You will get a copy of this consent form. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Judith Swartz

Consent Statement

I understand the procedures described. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I freely agree to participate in this study. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

I have been given a copy of this Consent Form.

Signature

Date

Signature of Researcher

In my judgment, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, CSUMB

AUDIO/VIDEO CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Feminist Art History and Theory at California State University
Monterey Bay: A Descriptive Case Study of a New Course

As part of this project, I will be making audiotape recordings of you during the research. Please indicate what uses of these tapes you are willing to permit by putting your initials next to the uses you agree to and sign the form at the end.

This choice is completely up to you. I will only use the tapes in ways you agree. In any use of the tapes, you will not be identified by name.

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 1. | The tapes can be studied by the research team for use in the research project. | _____ |
| 2. | The tapes can be used for educational purposes. | _____ |
| 3. | The tapes can be used for scientific publications. | _____ |
| 4. | The tapes can be shown at scientific conferences or meetings. | _____ |
| 5. | The tapes can be shown in the classrooms to students. | _____ |
| 6. | The tapes can be used on television or radio. | _____ |
| 7. | The tapes can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific groups. | _____ |
| 8. | The tapes can be posted to a website. | _____ |
-

Consent Statement

I have read the above descriptions and give my consent for the use of the tapes as indicated by my initials above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I freely agree to participate in this study. I know that I can stop taping at any time.

I have been given a copy of this Consent Form.

Signature

Date

Signature of Researcher

In my judgment, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix E-Course Syllabus Description

VPA 341-Feminist Art: History and Theory cross-listed with HCOM 341.

This team-taught, interdisciplinary learning experience will provide an exploratory introduction to both practical and theoretical models of feminisms and art. Students will develop their ability to understand and articulate cross-cultural differences in the understanding of forms of feminisms, exploring issues of race, gender, heritage, labor, lived experiences, and family roles in the context of art. Traditional folk and vernacular art forms will be presented and discussed as underlying sources for feminist art and creative expression. Students will create hands-on and community art projects.

This learning experience will provide an opportunity for you

- To focus on themes and issues that pertain to specific cultural and social groups.
- To address theoretical and analytical issues relevant to understanding both historical and contemporary representations of culture, race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality in the art of diverse cultures.
- To compare forms of cultural expression from more than one United States group (such as African-Americans, indigenous peoples of the United States, Asian-Americans, Chicanas, Latina-Americans, and European-Americans) within a local or global context.

Class participation: Overall participation is evaluated based on an appropriate level of involvement in class discussions, your ability to provide information in class presentations and your willingness to contribute to the class as a team member.

Participation assessment is also based on your preparation for class as demonstrated by

your ability to discuss selections from the VPA 341 readings, attend guest lectures, and actively engage in studio sessions.

Teamwork in small groups: Students meet in small groups to prepare their public presentation. These activities involve reading, writing, and cooperative behavior skills. The presentation involves performance, creative and artistic displays, film clips and elaborate narratives to engage the class.

1. Timely preparation of materials
2. Responsible, respectful and equitable participation in a team
3. Active participation in class discussion

Within the team and group discussion process, the following norms must be maintained:

1. Respect for difference of opinion
2. Equitable distribution of work
3. Encouragement for active participation
4. Civil and courteous discourse

Modes of learning: Sketchbook/journal. Students will maintain an on-going sketchbook-journal where they will record personal feminist reflections, collage media and popular culture material, image Xeroxes, class notes, glossary entries, art notes, and any other creative expressions related to the class.

Studio sessions: Students will participate with a creative spirit in studio sessions related to class assignments and art skills.

Personal reflection: Students will use personal reflection as a means of connecting theory and practice in class activities.

Appendix F- Transcription of Observational Field Notes

Session 1

The first class session was an opportunity for the students to introduce themselves and give their peers a little background information. Each student was asked their name and to inform the class whether they considered themselves feminist or not. Ten of the students indicated they were sympathetic to the notion of equality for women, with the remaining students identifying themselves as non-feminists. Most admitted to an inadequate understanding of feminist theory, but were looking forward to learning about it in the class. The professor handed out the class syllabus and noted that in the class, students would be doing basically four things. First, we would look at the work of feminist artists, not just women artists, but also those artists who make art that addresses issues of feminism. Learning about these artists would be in the form of slide lectures and videos. Secondly, students would be asked to create their own art pieces at various times throughout the term based on some of the feminist issues we would be discussing. Thirdly, we would be asked to read some feminist theorists written work as it relates to the world of art history. Lastly, we would be expected to attend in-class guest lectures by feminist professors who teach in other disciplines at CSUMB. The class closed with the professor giving the class their first creative piece assignment. This assignment was called the Media Messages Collage. She asked the class to look in magazines and newspapers for images of women in popular media that affirm the identity of women, items that portray a positive image of women. She also asked the class to gather media images that refute or disparage a woman's image. Students would be expected to create a collage with the images collected and bring them the following week. This same collage would serve as the basis for another assignment due in March.

Session 2

The next class meeting had nine students present and began with a slide lecture of the work of various feminist women artists. The professor identified each artist and the piece, and led a discussion in class of the analysis of each work. She encouraged students to critically analyze

each work and share with the class what they believed the meaning of the work might be. Students sat quietly and some offered minimal comments. In the following few weeks, I observed that the students tended to arrive later and later and in fewer numbers though there was a core group of about ten students who were pretty consistent with their attendance and with the completion of assignments. This lack of attendance did create a need for the professor to make changes to the syllabus and change some of the due dates for assignments, creating a sense of disorganization.

Session three

Students presented their collages on the positive and negative images and portrayals of women in the media. The structure for this activity was a bit like a gallery setting in which the professor asked students to hang their collage on the wall of the classroom. The students would then go around the room as if in a gallery and view each piece. After everyone had a chance to view the work, the professor asked students to explain the meaning of their piece to the group.

Session four

This class session was one in which students continued to look at the collages of other students and to participate in class discussions regarding the media's portrayal of women. This topic was important because it is the basis for much artwork done by feminists as they question their image in society. During this period, the assignment to create a Feminist Genealogy was assigned. This also was a creative visual art piece in which students were expected to use family history, literary, mythic and historical figures in a visual format. The genealogy could be done in a variety of forms, such as a book, a family tree, a map, or an annotated chronology, or any other expansive visual document, to be accompanied by a two-page key or explanation of why particular people and characters were used, and what meaning they had for the student in the development of the student's personal idea of feminism and what it meant to them. This assignment was due on February 15, 2005.

Session five

In this session students were broken into groups and were asked to each read a section of the Griselda Pollack article, "Introduction to Feminist Art Histories" from her 1998 book, *Vision and Difference*. Students read the article and then came back together for a small group discussion of the main points. This was to be followed by a two-page reflection of the articles main points due on February 17, 2005. I observed students in this group expressing dislike for the article as most appeared not to have critically analyzed such a complex article before. Few students understood feminist theory and most had not been exposed to Marxist theory, which informs the way author Pollack interprets the value of art in society.

Session six

That session was another in which students looked at more slide images of feminist art work. The professor covered work by women from the 1950s to the 1970s. During the slide lecture, the professor conducted a discussion of each artist, and an analysis of each piece. Students participated in the discussion. Some students were familiar with some of the work, but some were hearing about these artists for the first time.

Session seven

This session was a studio session and we met in the VPA art studio, building 72. The activity for this session was the assignment of the Body Maps, in which students would create an annotated map of their body, addressing their gender identity, using text, poetry, collage, drawings, paint and found objects or other materials affixed to a paper cutout of each student's body. During this session students paired up and took turns tracing each other's outline onto brown craft paper. We then cut out our shapes and when finished, were allowed to leave for the day. The finished Body Map was due on February 24, 2005.

Session eight

This class session was a discussion session in which we revisited the Griselda Pollack article. Students went back into their groups and had some group discussion on what they wrote

and then we came together as a class, to continue a larger discussion of Pollack's theories on feminist art. I observed that students expressed an inability to understand the article and hesitated to offer comments in the small group and class discussion.

Session nine

Only nine students attended this session. Professor Siobhan Arnold of VPA gave a guest lecture on the portrayal of the female form in traditional art. She started out her lecture with a slide presentation. She showed the work of various European and American male artists considered to be at the forefront in traditional art history. The particular works she was showing were those that had some sort of portrayal of the female form. She discussed how in many piece, women were often depicted as whores. This led into her discussion of the "male gaze", where in classical and contemporary art, and even in today's media images, women are portrayed in a way that men want to see them. The students were very involved in this discussion and expressed no hesitancy to share comments with the group.

Session ten

This session's lectures were about two different feminist artists. The class watched a video on the life and work of Ana Mendieta, a Cuban born woman who made art in nature, and Hannah Wilke, an American woman working in the 1970s. She is known for her series of performances in which she used her own body to confront the erotic representation of women in art history and popular culture. Following the videos, the class was asked to hang their Body Maps on the walls for the gallery style critique of the work. Students first walked around and looked at each piece and then each student was asked to comment on why they chose to incorporate the items they used on their artwork and to explain what the piece meant in relation to the student's gender identity.

Session eleven

I was not present for this session and did not observe the lecture by Professor Ilene Feinman who also teaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences department. Her lecture was on

feminist activism in our society. Students were assigned a two-page reflection of this lecture to be due on March 10, 2005.

Session twelve

Eight students were present for this session, which consisted of a lecture on art. The video is on Ann Hamilton, an American woman artist best known for her work in large-scale installation. Following the presentation, the professor made time for some class discussion of the work and the artists.

Session thirteen

Fourteen students attended this session and we had a guest lecture by Professor Michelle Riel who is a professor in the Teledramatic Arts and Technology department. Professor Riel discussed digital and other electronic art by women in the electronic media realm. There were technical difficulties and Professor Riel was unable to show her PowerPoint presentation, so she planned to return at the next session to show it.

The professor assigned a free write session as the lecture from Michelle Riel was cut short. She asked the students to answer the question, "How would you describe feminist art?" Students used their sketchbook/journals to answer the question and this kept the class busy until the professor signaled an end to the free write session and split the class into groups of about five each. Each group was assigned to create a campus specific art project that would address an issue of women's concern on campus. My group was concerned with the increase in STDs on campus and the lack of information available to women. We discussed possibilities for an art project dealing with STDs, specifically the HPV virus.

Session thirteen

Fourteen students were present for this class session. Michelle Riel returned to present the PowerPoint she was unable to present during the prior session. The PowerPoint presentation was entitled Women, Media, and Visual Literacy. Professor Riel gave examples of women artists working in the electronic media realm. For example, she discussed the work of Natalie Bookchin

who is developing an online global politics game for the online gaming community, which challenges cultural inequities such as violence and the present political system.

During this presentation I observed some signs of disengagement with the lecture on the part of the students. There was a bit of whispering, yawning and looking around. I was having a bit of trouble following the lecture myself, as the subject matter didn't really grab my attention.

Session fourteen

Seven students were present for this class session. The professor handed back the four assignments to date. Following some discussion about assignments, there was a video on Mierle Ukeles, a woman from New York, who is best known for her work as the artist in residence for the New York City Sanitation Department. Ukeles uses garbage and found items and re-uses them in her creations. She has designed waterfront parks and made structures from refuse. Later the class was given free time to work on group projects. Each group was asked to prepare a project proposal and have it ready to turn in on March 17, 2005. Our group worked on an idea to use the Body Map idea that we had previously done as an assignment. We decided to make Body Maps about the various issues for women that surround STDs and the HPV virus, and exhibit them at the Black Box Cabaret for the Sex Show event that was to take place there. The Sex Show is a yearly event put on by the campus's EMPOWER Club. This women's club promotes empowerment of female students through activities and events on campus. The Sex Show is an event during which students learn about sexual issues and how to create a sexually responsible environment on campus. We worked on our proposal to ready it for the next session.

Session fifteen

This class session was spent allowing the groups to work individually on their public art projects. Our group worked on discussion of the various components we wanted to represent on each of our Body Maps and then we spent time cutting them out.

We decided that each Body Map should reflect a different topic. Topics we chose to represent were sexual responsibility, sexual safety, information, and the physical, societal, and

emotional effects of the illnesses. We each worked individually on the Maps and I did the painting of my Map at my home.

Session sixteen

This was the first class meeting following spring break and ten students were present. The guest lecturer for this session was Kathryn Poethig who is also a lecturer in the Global Studies department. Professor Poethig gave a lecture on Global Feminism and she discussed two topics the first was regarding a practice still seen in India known as bride burning, or dowry murders, in which there is so much corruption with doctors and law enforcement, that men can easily get away with burning their wives to death to get out of a marriage. The benefit to the man is that he can end one relationship without the need to pay alimony, and can earn another dowry from the family of his new bride.

The next topic that Professor Poethig presented was the issue of honor killings, which occur in Pakistan and other areas with a heavy Islamic population. An honor killing occurs when a woman engages in any behavior interpreted by her male relations to dishonor the family. Even if a woman is raped, her male relations can interpret this as the woman behaving in a sexually promiscuous way, and her father, husband, or brothers, may kill her.

During this class I observed that the students were particularly agitated and offered a great deal of comments during the discussion. Professor Poethig's lecture not only informed the students about such issues, but she was also trying to bring forward a point about what she called the imperial eye. She pointed out that as Westerners, the class was outraged by what they learned, but that so many crimes against women occur right here in the United States. Violence against women is increasing and when people from other cultures look at ours, they feel outrage about that as well. She encouraged the students to look at the issues of other cultures with an open mind and with an eye to seeing the atrocities in their own culture.

Session seventeen

Ten students were present for this class meeting. We further discussed the honor killing and dowry murders with the class professor who was not present for the last session. Students were so interested that she felt she wanted to hear some of what students were feeling about the lecture. Following this discussion the students had a presentation on Artist Hung Liu, a Chinese-American artist who teaches at Mills College, a prestigious women's liberal arts college and who is known for her imposing large-format oil paintings of Chinese women and Chinese figures in history. We watched a video about her and had some class discussion regarding the critical analysis of her work.

Session eighteen

Thirteen students were present for this class meeting. The professor handed out questionnaires for the students to fill out regarding their perceptions and their ranking on guest lecturers. She handed out a list of feminist artists that students in the class could choose from for their final project, which was to create a detailed report on the work of one artist. The class watched a video on Judith Baca, another feminist artist from the LA area, who was also a founding faculty member for the Visual and Public Art Department at CSUMB. She is very well known for her work with young people in East Los Angeles. She and her team of young artists create murals in the LA area. Some famous ones are along the freeways in LA. After the video, the professor handed out a reading for the students to read over the weekend in preparation for the next guest lecturer, Stephanie Johnson.

Session nineteen

Out of class work session for group projects

Session twenty

Out of class work session for group projects

Session twenty-one

Out of class work session for group projects

Session twenty-two

This session featured Stephanie Johnson as the guest lecturer. Her topic was Black Feminisms and Art and she shared the work of various black feminist artists through a presentation of slides of their work. There were nine students present for this lecture and I observed the students showing a great deal of engagement with this lecture. Professor Johnson made some very interesting points about how black women artists had to work harder to make a place in the art movement because the feminist movements up until the 1960s didn't really address the needs of black women, while the civil rights movement was geared toward equality for black men first and women second.

Professor Johnson also worked with the class to help each group come up with a manifesto for the public art piece that each group completed in various locations on campus.

Session twenty-three

Thirteen students were present for this class meeting and each of the groups presented their feminist public art project and manifesto to the group. Each group had presented some form on public art project that was displayed on campus. One group had done a banner that they posted on the side of the administration building, which questioned the university administration's commitment to safety for women. This piece was done in response to the news that this campus has one of the highest incidences of rape in the CSU system. The banner was immediately removed from the building and only was on display until the administration building staff realized it was there. Another group got involved with the Take Back the Night event that was an event to demand an end to violence against women with candlelight vigils and other activities. My group did the paper Body Maps that were hung on display in the Black Box Cabaret for the Sex Show event, which is an empowerment event for women that informs and educates about sexually transmitted diseases and other sexual issues for women.

Session twenty-four

I was not present for this class meeting.

Session twenty-five

Nine students were present for this session in which the students began to present their individual project. The individual project was a comprehensive report on the life and work of a feminist artist. The first presentation was by the one male student in the class and he gave a presentation on Frida Kahlo. He did a PowerPoint presentation on her life and work and he chose to discuss some of her very symbolic paintings and self-portraits. He was the only one scheduled to present that showed up for this session so we spent a lot of time on discussion.

Session twenty-six

Thirteen students were present for this session and it was a continuation of the individual artist presentations. The first presentation was on Carrie Mae Weems who was a black female photographer, known for her portraiture, but who also used photography to examine the image of the black woman. She used herself in much of her work.

The next presentation was on Las Mujeres Muralistas. This was a group of three Latina women who were best known for the murals they did in the San Francisco area. Many of their murals were done guerilla-style, meaning that they were not commissioned. The women just painted on the sides of buildings and in many cases they were repainted. Much of their work no longer exists. The student shared slides with the class of the murals.

The next presentation was on Georgia O'Keeffe. We watched a PowerPoint presentation of examples of her work. She was one of the few women artists who were successful painting during the early 1900s. She was best known for her paintings of both the New Mexico desert and of very large flowers, which are sometimes interpreted as representations of female genitalia, though Georgia O'Keeffe always denied that this was the case.

The next student did a PowerPoint presentation of Johanna Poethig who is also a professor in the Visual and Public Art department at CSUMB. In addition to teaching art classes here, the students showed a video by Poethig that showcases her performance art. She does

performance art in the characters of several personas. Her performances bring attention to women's issues of media and social image.

Session twenty-seven

This session was a continuation of the individual artist presentations. Today's class started with a PowerPoint presentation on Carmen Lomas Garza. This artist is well known for her illustrative paintings that reflect scenes from her childhood of her Mexican cultural influences. The paintings honor family and customs that she was familiar with in her home as a child. She also wrote some children's books and used her colorful painting style to illustrate them.

The next artist presented was Karen Finley who was a performance artist. She was known for her outrageous style of performance art, which has often caused controversy. She often used her own nude body covered in chocolate or honey to make her point about violence against women and other women's issues.

The next artist presented during this class was Ester Hernandez. She is probably best known for her poster entitled Sun Mad Raisins, in which she parodied the Sun Maid Raisin trademark by replacing the wholesome young maiden with a skeleton to represent that the people working in the fields were being poisoned by the pesticides used in the grape industry. This was a rather controversial piece that resulted in a lawsuit against Hernandez for her use of the Sun Maid trademark.

Session twenty-eight

There were twelve students present for this class meeting. The rest of the individual presentations took place. The first one was a PowerPoint presentation of the artist Hung Liu. This Chinese-born woman paints very large oil paintings of characters that represent her history and heritage as a Chinese woman. She is a teacher at Mills College and creates very beautiful images of Chinese ancestors and other historical characters.

The next presentation was a PowerPoint presentation of the work of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. This artist is a Native American woman who was born in 1940 on the Flathead Indian

Reservation. She is best known for her paintings and prints that address the oppression of Native cultures and environmental issues.

The last presentation was my own. I prepared a PowerPoint presentation of the life and work of Ann Hamilton. She is an installation artist who is very well known for her large installations in galleries, and even warehouses. She addresses issues of the body and it's vulnerability. She is probably best known for her installation at the 1998 Venice Biennale. She represented this country as one of the artists chosen to exhibit and she did a haunting work in which a raised Braille poem on the wall became visible as a bright magenta powder fell from the ceilings and covered the Braille dots.

Session twenty-nine

This was the final class session and I brought some snacks and the professor brought some sweets. We used the time to do the teacher evaluation and then we had snacks. The class was the final one and after finishing a final evaluation, doing the professor evaluation and sitting around chatting together, we were all excused for the day.

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